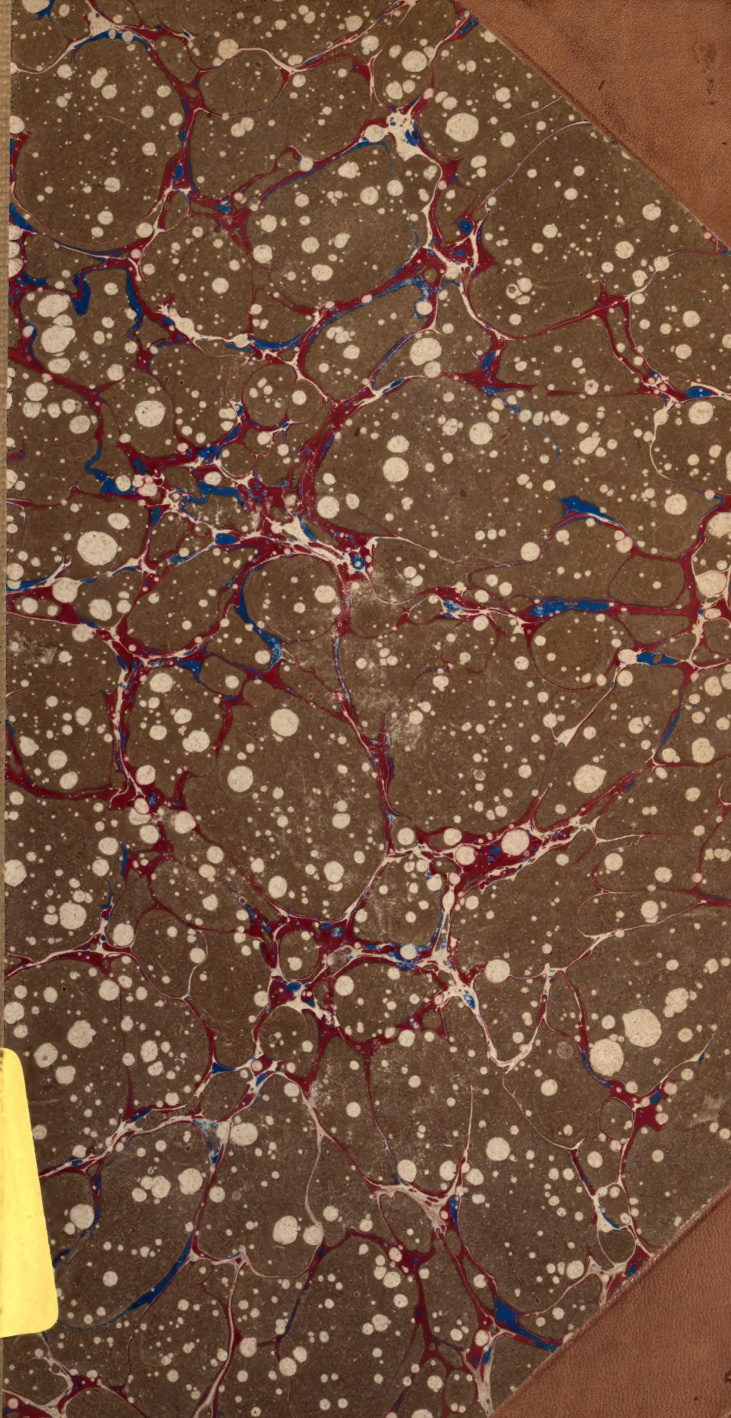
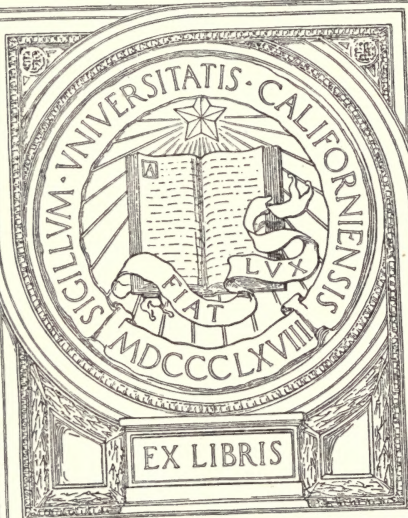
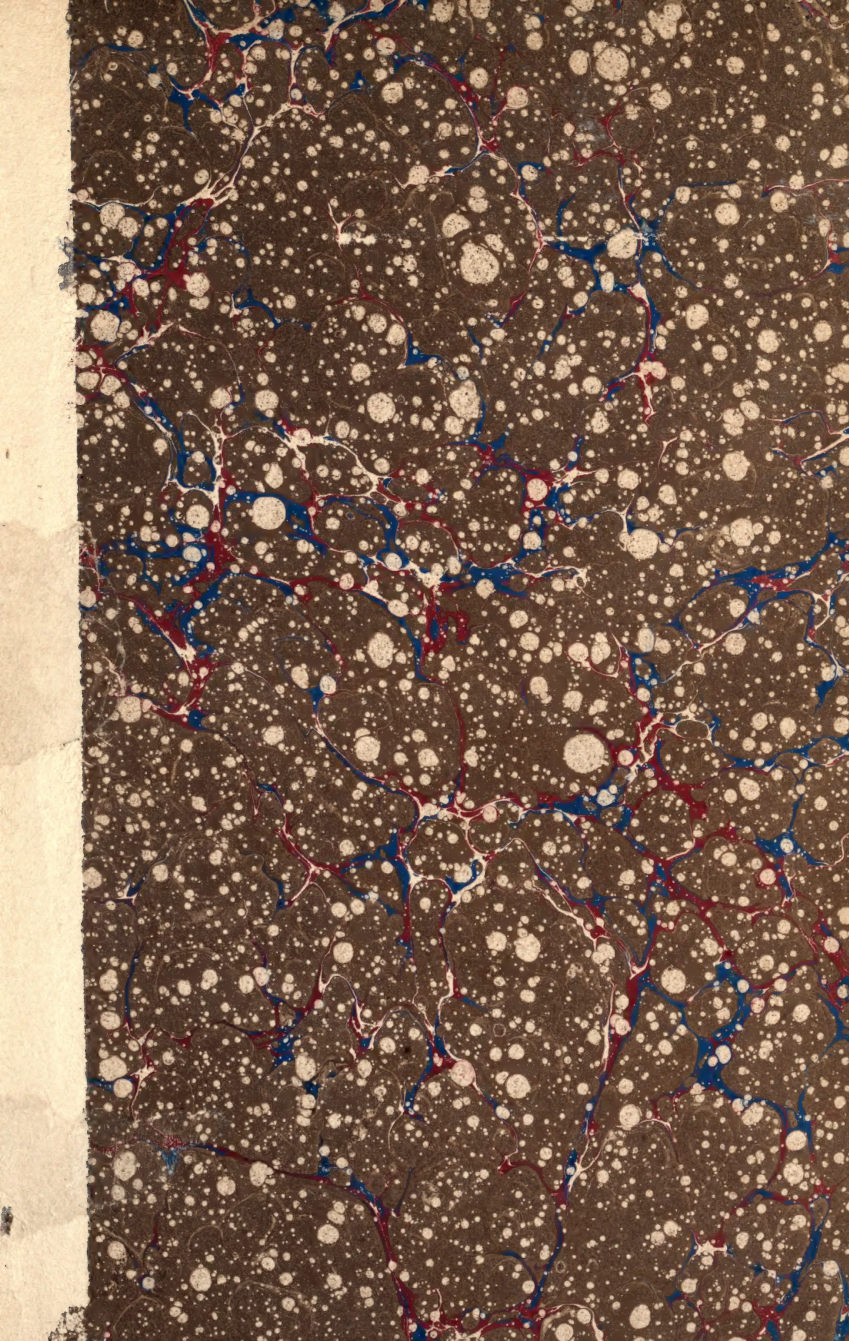


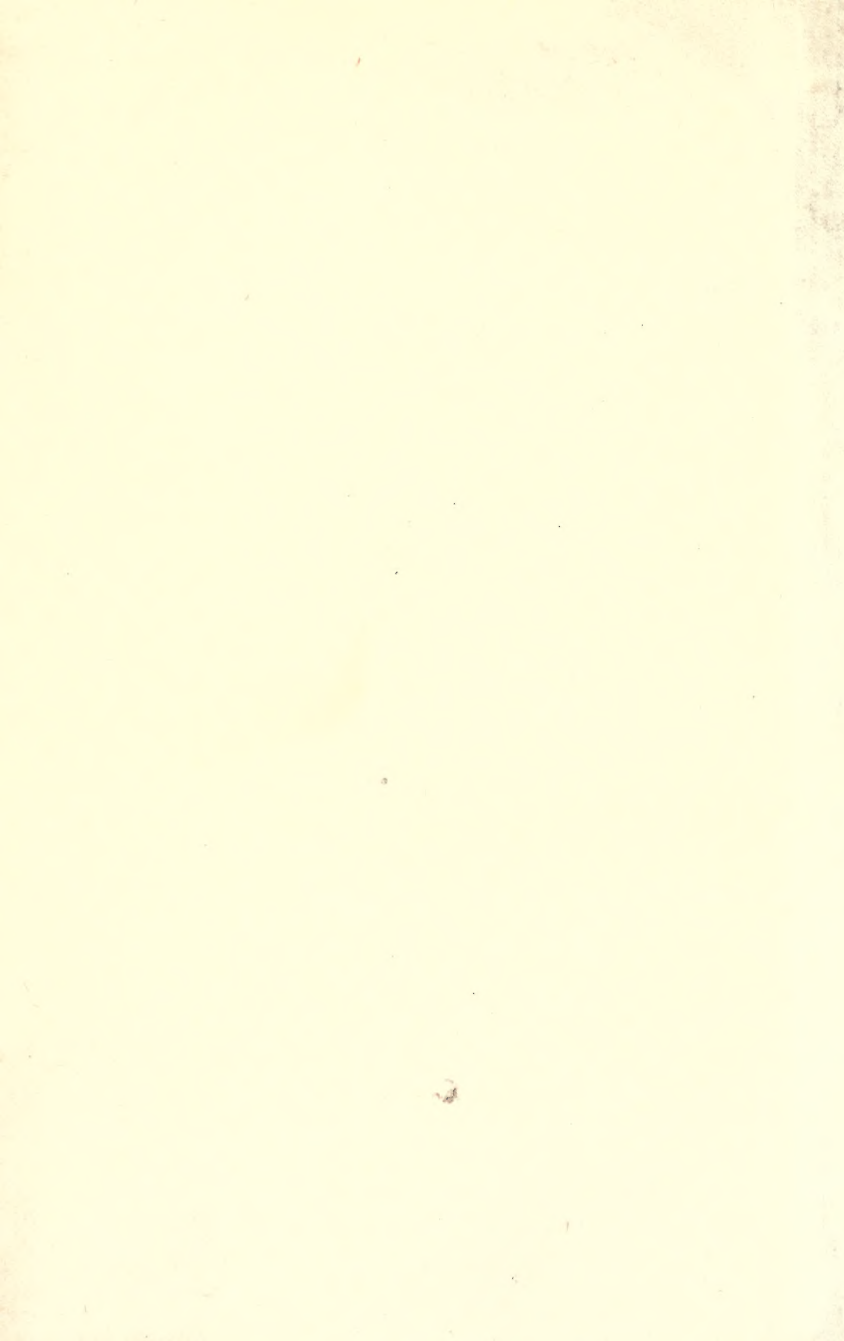
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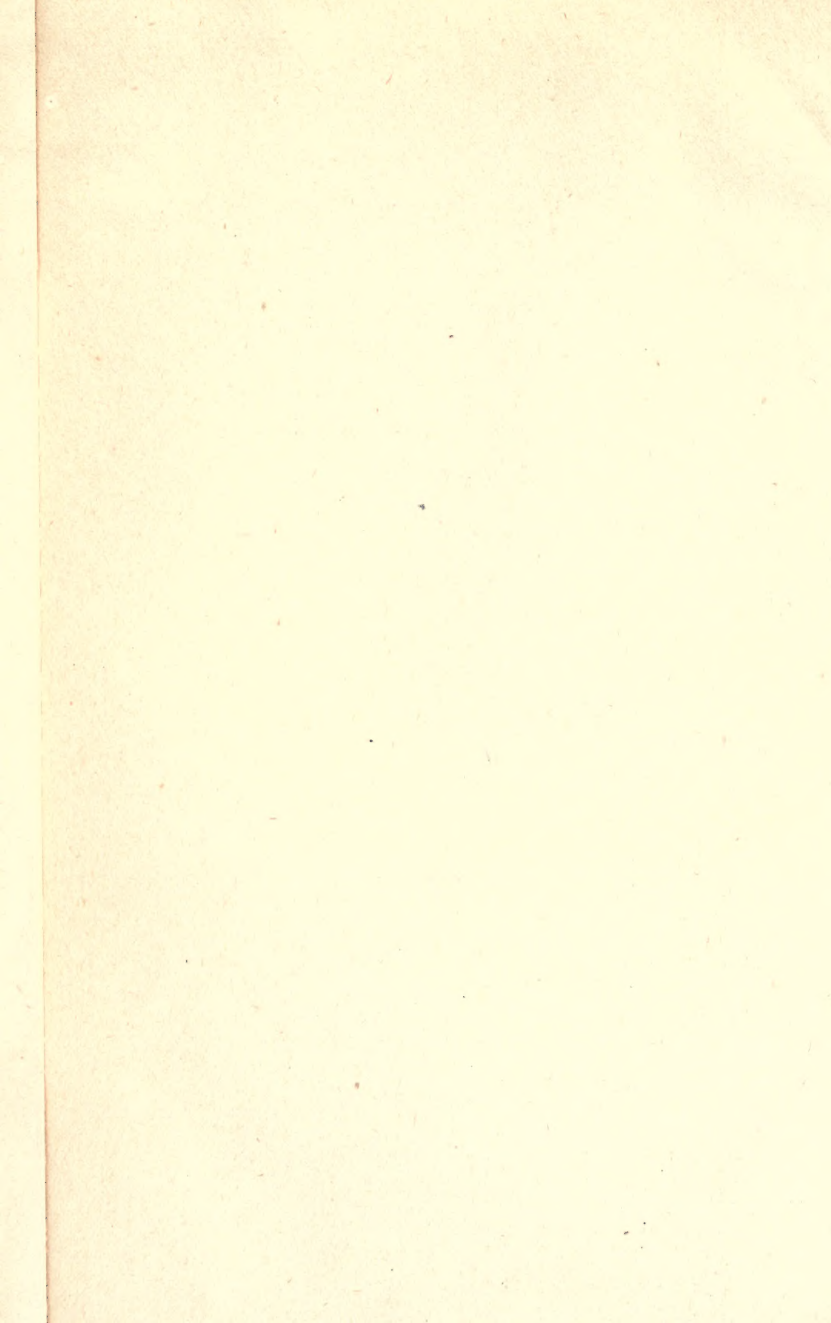
GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison











THE LIFE

OF

WASHINGTON.

BY

WASHINGTON IRVING

VOL. II

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TO THE
LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS

LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETREAT FROM LONG ISLAND.

THE night after the battle was a weary, yet almost sleepless one to the Americans. Fatigued, dispirited, many of them sick and wounded, yet they were, for the most part, without tent or other shelter. To Washington it was a night of anxious vigil. Everything boded a close and deadly conflict. The enemy had pitched a number of tents about a mile distant. Their sentries were but a quarter of a mile off, and close to the American sentries. At four o'clock in the morning, Washington went the round of the works, to see that all was right, and to speak words of encouragement. The morning broke lowering and dreary. Large encampments were gradually descried; to appearance the enemy were twenty thousand strong. As the day advanced, their ordnance began to play upon the works. They were proceeding to entrench themselves, but were driven into their tents by a drenching rain.

Early in the morning General Mifflin arrived in camp, with part of the troops which had been stationed at Fort Washington and King's Bridge. He brought with him Shee's prime Philadelphia regiment, and Magaw's Pennsylvania regiment, both well disciplined and officered, and accustomed to act together. They were so much reduced in number, however, by sickness, that they did not amount in the whole, to more than eight hundred men. With Mifflin came also Colonel Glover's Massachusetts regiment, composed chiefly of Marblehead fishermen and sailors, hardy, adroit, and weather-proof; trimly clad in blue jacket and trousers. The detachment numbered, in the whole, about thirteen hundred men, all fresh and full of spirits. Every eye brightened as they marched briskly along the line with alert step and cheery aspect. They were posted at the left extremity of the intrenchments towards the Wallabout.

There were skirmishes throughout the day, between the riflemen on the advanced posts and the British "irregulars," which at times were quite severe ; but no decided attack was attempted. The main body of the enemy kept within their tents until the latter part of the day ; when they began to break ground at about five hundred yards' distance from the works, as if preparing to carry them by regular approaches.

On the 29th, there was a dense fog over the island, that wrapped everything in mystery. In the course of the morning, General Mifflin, with Adjutant-general Reed, and Colonel Graysen of Virginia, one of Washington's aides-de-camp, rode to the western outposts, in the neighborhood of Red Hook. While they were there, a light breeze lifted the fog from a part of the New York Bay, and revealed the British ships at their anchorage opposite Staten Island. There appeared to be an unusual bustle among them. Boats were passing to and from the admiral's ship, as if seeking or carrying orders. Some movement was apparently in agitation. The idea occurred to the reconnoitering party that the fleet was preparing, should the wind hold and the fog clear away, to come up the bay at the turn of the tide, silence the feeble batteries at Red Hook and the city, and anchor in the East River. In that case the army on Long Island would be completely surrounded and entrapped.

Alarmed at this perilous probability, they spurred back to head-quarters, to urge the immediate withdrawal of the army. As this might not be acceptable advice, Reed, emboldened by his intimacy with the commander-in-chief undertook to give it. Washington instantly summoned a council of war. The difficulty was already apparent, of guarding such extensive works with troops fatigued and dispirited, and exposed to the inclemencies of the weather. Other dangers now presented themselves. Their communication with New York might be cut off by the fleet from below. Other ships had passed round Long Island, and were at Flushing Bay on the Sound. These might land troops on the east side of Harlem River, and make themselves masters of King's Bridge ; that key of Manhattan Island. Taking all these things into consideration, it was resolved to cross with the troops to the city that very night.

Never did retreat require greater secrecy and circumspection. Nine thousand men, with all the munitions of war, were to be withdrawn from before a victorious army, encamped so near that every stroke of spade and pickaxe from their trenches could be heard. The retreating troops, moreover, were to be embarked and conveyed across a strait three-quarters of a mile wide, swept

by rapid tides. The least alarm of their movement would bring the enemy upon them, and produce a terrible scene of confusion and carnage at the place of embarkation.

Washington made the preparatory arrangements with great alertness, yet profound secrecy. Verbal orders were sent to Colonel Hughes, who acted as quartermaster-general, to impress all water craft, large and small, from Spyt den Duivel on the Hudson round to Hell Gate on the Sound, and have them on the east side of the city by evening. The order was issued at noon, and so promptly executed, that, although some of the vessels had to be brought a distance of fifteen miles, they were all at Brooklyn at eight o'clock in the evening, and put under the management of Colonel Glover's amphibious Marblehead regiment.

To prepare the army for a general movement without betraying the object, orders were issued for the troops to hold themselves in readiness for a night attack upon the enemy. The orders caused surprise, for the poor fellows were exhausted, and their arms rendered nearly useless by the rain; all, however, prepared to obey; but several made nuncupative wills, as is customary among soldiers on the eve of sudden and deadly peril.

According to Washington's plan of retreat, to keep the enemy from discovering the withdrawal of the Americans until their main body should have embarked in the boats and pushed off from the shore, General Mifflin was to remain at the lines with his Pennsylvania troops, and the gallant remains of Haslet, Smallwood, and Hand's regiments, with guards posted and sentinels alert, as if nothing extraordinary was taking place; when the main embarkation was effected, they were themselves to move off quietly, march briskly to the ferry, and embark. In case of any alarm that might disconcert the arrangements, Brooklyn church was to be the rallying place, whither all should repair, so as unitedly to resist any attack.

It was late in the evening when the troops began to retire from the breastworks. As one regiment quietly withdrew from their station on guard, the troops on the right and left moved up and filled the vacancy. There was a stifled murmur in the camp, unavoidable in a movement of the kind; but it gradually died away in the direction of the river, as the main body moved on in silence and order. The youthful Hamilton, whose military merits had won the favor of General Greene, and who had lost his baggage and a field-piece in the battle, brought up the rear of the retreating party. In the dead of the night, and in the midst of this hushed and anxious movement, a cannon went off with a tremendous roar. "The effect," says an American

who was present, "was at once alarming and sublime. If the explosion was within our lines, the gun was probably discharged in the act of spiking it, and could have been no less a matter of speculation to the enemy than to ourselves." *

"What with the greatness of the stake, the darkness of the night, the uncertainty of the design, and the extreme hazard of the issue," adds the same writer, "it would be difficult to conceive a more deeply solemn and interesting scene."

The meaning of this midnight gun was never ascertained; fortunately, though it startled the Americans, it failed to rouse the British camp.

In the meantime the embarkation went on with all possible despatch, under the vigilant eye of Washington, who stationed himself at the ferry, superintending every movement. In his anxiety for despatch, he sent back Colonel Scammell, one of his aides-de-camp, to hasten forward all the troops that were on the march. Scammell blundered in executing his errand, and gave the order to Mifflin likewise. The general instantly called in his pickets and sentinels, and set off for the ferry.

By this time the tide had turned; there was a strong wind from the northeast; the boats with oars were insufficient to convey the troops; those with sails could not make headway against wind and tide. There was some confusion at the ferry, and in the midst of it, General Mifflin came down with the whole covering party, adding to the embarrassment and uproar.

"Good God! General Mifflin!" cried Washington, "I am afraid you have ruined us by so unseasonably withdrawing the troops from the lines."

"I did so by your order," replied Mifflin with some warmth.

"It cannot be!" exclaimed Washington.

"By G—, I did!" was the blunt rejoinder. "Did Scammell act as aide-de-camp for the day, or did he not?"

"He did."

"Then," said Mifflin, "I had orders through him."

"It is a dreadful mistake," rejoined Washington, "and unless the troops can regain the lines before their absence is discovered by the enemy, the most disastrous consequences are to be apprehended."

Mifflin led back his men to the lines, which had been completely deserted for three-quarters of an hour. Fortunately, the dense fog had prevented the enemy from discovering that they were unoccupied. The men resumed their former posts, and remained at them until called off to cross the ferry. "Who-

ever has seen troops in a similar situation," writes General Heath, "or duly contemplates the human heart in such trials, will know how to appreciate the conduct of these brave men on this occasion."

The fog which prevailed all this time, seemed almost providential. While it hung over Long Island, and concealed the movements of the Americans, the atmosphere was clear on the New York side of the river. The adverse wind, too, died away, the river became so smooth that the row-boats could be laden almost to the gunwale; and a favoring breeze sprang up for the sail-boats. The whole embarkation of troops, artillery, ammunition, provisions, cattle, horses and carts, was happily effected, and by day-break the greater part had safely reached the city, thanks to the aid of Glover's Marblehead men. Scarce anything was abandoned to the enemy, excepting a few heavy pieces of artillery. At a proper time, Mifflin with his covering party left the lines, and effected a silent retreat to the ferry. Washington, though repeatedly entreated, refused to enter a boat until all the troops were embarked; and crossed the river with the last.

A Long Island tradition tells how the British camp became aware of the march which had been stolen upon it.* Near the ferry, resided a Mrs. Rapelye, whose husband, suspected of favoring the enemy, had been removed to the interior of New Jersey. On seeing the embarkation of the first detachment, she, out of loyalty or revenge, sent off a black servant to inform the first British officer he could find, of what was going on. The negro succeeded in passing the American sentinels, but arrived at a Hessian outpost, where he could not make himself understood, and was put under guard as a suspicious person. There he was kept until daybreak, when an officer visiting the post, examined him, and was astounded by his story. An alarm was given, the troops were called to arms; Captain Montresor, aide-de-camp of General Howe, followed by a handful of men, climbed cautiously over the crest of the works and found them deserted. Advanced parties were hurried down to the ferry. The fog had cleared away sufficiently for them to see the rear boats of the retreating army half-way across the river. One boat, still within musket shot, was compelled to return; it was manned by three vagabonds, who had lingered behind to plunder.

This extraordinary retreat, which, in its silence and celerity, equaled the midnight fortifying of Bunker's Hill, was one of

* *Hist. Long Island*, p. 258.

the most signal achievements of the war, and redounded greatly to the reputation of Washington, who, we are told, for forty-eight hours preceding the safe extricating of his army from their perilous situation, scarce closed his eyes, and was the greater part of the time on horseback. Many, however, who considered the variety of risks and dangers which surrounded the camp, and the apparently fortuitous circumstances which averted them all, were disposed to attribute the safe retreat of the patriot army to a peculiar Providence.

CHAPTER II.

LONG ISLAND IN POSSESSION OF THE ENEMY.—DISTRESSED SITUATION OF THE AMERICAN ARMY AT NEW YORK.—QUESTION OF ABANDONING THE CITY.—LETTERS FROM EITHER CAMP.—ENEMY'S SHIPS IN THE SOUND.—REMOVAL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM THE CITY.—YEARNING FOR HOME AMONG THE MILITIA.—TOLERANT IDEAS OF WASHINGTON AND GREENE.—FORT CONSTITUTION.—CONFERENCE OF LORD HOWE WITH A COMMITTEE FROM CONGRESS.

THE enemy had now possession of Long Island. British and Hessian troops garrisoned the work at Brooklyn, or were distributed at Bushwick, Newton, Hell Gate, and Flushing. Admiral Howe came up with the main body of the fleet, and anchored close to Governor's Island, within cannon shot of the city.

"Our situation is truly distressing," writes Washington to the President of Congress, on the 2d of September. "The check our detachment sustained on the 27th ultimo has dispirited too great a portion of our troops, and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia, instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition in order to repair our losses, are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers of them have gone off; in some instances almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies, at a time. . . . With the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops. . . . Our number of men at present fit for duty is under twenty thousand. I have ordered General Mercer to send the men intended for the flying camp to this place, about

a thousand in number, and to try with the militia, if practicable, to make a diversion upon Staten Island. Till of late, I had no doubt in my own mind of defending this place; nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty, but this I despair of.

"If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter quarters for the enemy? They would derive great conveniences from it, on the one hand, and much property would be destroyed on the other. It is an important question, but will admit of but little time for deliberation. At present I dare say the enemy mean to preserve it if they can. If Congress, therefore, should resolve upon the destruction of it, the resolution should be a profound secret, as the knowledge will make a capital change in their plans."

Colonel Reed, writing on the same day to his wife, says, "I have only time to say I am alive and well; as to spirits, but middling. . . . My country will, I trust, yet be free, whatever may be our fate who are cooped up, or are in danger of so being on this tongue of land, where we ought never to have been." *

We turn to cite letters of the very same date from British officers on Long Island, full of rumors and surmises. "I have just heard," writes an English field officer, "there has been a most dreadful fray in the town of New York. The New Englanders insisted on setting the town on fire and retreating. This was opposed by the New Yorkers, who were joined by the Pennsylvanians, and a battle has been the consequence, in which many have lost their lives. By the steps our general is taking, I imagine he will effectually cut off their retreat at King's Bridge, by which the island of New York is joined to the continent."

An English officer of the Guards, writing from camp on the same day, varies the rumor. The Pennsylvanians, according to his version, joined with the New Englanders in the project to set fire to the town; both had a battle with the New Yorkers on the subject, and then withdrew themselves from the city—which, "with other favorable circumstances," gave the latter writer a lively "hope that this distressful business would soon be brought to a happy issue."

Another letter gives a different version. "In the night of the 2d instant, three persons escaped from the city in a canoe and informed our general that Mr. Washington had ordered three battalions of New York provincials to leave New York, and they that should be replaced by an equal number of Con-

* Force's *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 123.

neciticut troops ; but the former, assured that the Connecticutians would burn and destroy all the houses, peremptorily refused to give up their city, declaring that no cause of exigency whatever should induce them to intrust the defense of it to any other than her own inhabitants. This spirited and stubborn resolution prevailed over the order of their commander, and the New Yorkers continue snugly in possession of the place." *

"Matters go on swimmingly," writes another officer. "I don't doubt the next news we send you, is, that New York is ours, though in ashes, for the rebel troops have vowed to put it in flames if the tory troops get over."

An American officer writes to an absent New Yorker, in a different tone. "I fear we shall evacuate your poor city. The very thought gives me the horrors!" Still he indulges a vague hope of succor from General Lee, who was returning, all glorious, from his successes at the South. "General Lee," writes he, "is hourly expected, as if from heaven,—with a legion of flaming swordsmen." It was, however, what Lee himself would have termed a mere *brutum fulmen*.

These letters show the state of feeling in the opposite camps, at this watchful moment, when matters seemed hurrying to a crisis.

On the night of Monday (Sept. 2d), a forty-gun ship, taking advantage of a favorable wind and tide, passed between Governor's Island and Long Island, swept unharmed by the batteries which opened upon her, and anchored in Turtle Bay, above the city. In the morning, Washington despatched Major Crane of the artillery, with two twelve-pounders and a howitzer to annoy her from the New York shore. They hulled her several times, and obliged her to take shelter behind Blackwell's Island. Several other ships of war, with transports and storeships, had made their appearance in the upper part of the Sound, having gone round Long Island.

As the city might speedily be attacked, Washington caused all the sick and wounded to be conveyed to Orangetown, in the Jerseys, and such military stores and baggage as were not immediately needed, to be removed, as fast as conveyances could be procured, to a post partially fortified at Dobbs' Ferry, on the eastern bank of the Hudson, about twenty-two miles above the city.

Reed in his letters to his wife, talks of the dark and mysterious motions of the enemy, and the equally dark and intricate councils of Congress, by which the army were disheartened and perplexed. "We are still here," writes he on the 6th,

* Force's *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 168.

"in a posture somewhat awkward; we think (at least I do) that we cannot stay, and yet we do not know how to go, so that we may be properly said to be between hawk and buzzard."

The "shameful and scandalous desertions," as Washington termed them, continued. In a few days the Connecticut militia dwindled down from six to less than two thousand. "The impulse for going home was so irresistible," writes he, "that it answered no purpose to oppose it. Though I would not discharge them, I have been obliged to acquiesce."

Still his considerate mind was tolerant of their defection. "Men," said he, "accustomed to unbounded freedom, cannot brook the restraint which is indispensably necessary to the good order and government of an army." And again, "Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill (which is followed by a want of confidence in themselves, when opposed to troops regularly trained, superior in knowledge, and superior in arms), are timid and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides, the sudden change in their manner of living, brings on an unconquerable desire to return to their homes."

Greene, also, who coincided so much with Washington in opinions and sentiments, observes: "People coming from home with all the tender feelings of domestic life, are not sufficiently fortified with natural courage to stand the shocking scenes of war. To march over dead men, to hear without concern the groans of the wounded, I say few men can stand such scenes unless steeled by habit or fortified by military pride."

Nor was this ill-timed yearning for home confined to the yeomanry of Connecticut, who might well look back to their humble farms, where they had left the plough standing in the furrow, and where everything might go to ruin, and their family to want, in their absence. Some of the gentlemen volunteers from beyond the Delaware, who had made themselves merry at the expense of the rustic soldiery of New England, were likewise among the first to feel the homeward impulse. "When I look around," said Reed, the adjutant-general, "and see how few of the numbers who talked so loudly of death and honor are around me, I am lost in wonder and surprise. Some of our Philadelphia gentlemen who came over on visits, upon the first cannon, went off in a most violent hurry. Your noisy sons of liberty, are, I find, the quietest on the field."*

Present experience induced Washington to reiterate the

* *Life of Reed*, i. 231.

opinion he had repeatedly expressed to Congress, that little reliance was to be placed on militia enlisted for short periods. The only means of protecting the national liberties from great hazard, if not utter loss, was, he said, an army enlisted for the war.

The thousand men ordered from the flying camp were furnished by General Mercer. They were Maryland troops under Colonels Griffith and Richardson, and were a seasonable addition to his effective forces; but the ammunition carried off by the disbanding militia, was a serious loss at this critical juncture.

A work had been commenced on the Jersey shore, opposite Fort Washington, to aid in protecting Putnam's chevaux-de-frise which had been sunk between them. This work had received the name of Fort Constitution (a name already borne by one of the forts in the Highlands). Troops were drawn from the flying camp to make a strong encampment in the vicinity of the fort, with an able officer to command it and a skillful engineer to strengthen the works. It was hoped, by the coöperation of these opposite forts and the chevaux-de-frise, to command the Hudson, and prevent the passing and repassing of hostile ships.

The British, in the meantime forebore to press further hostilities. Lord Howe was really desirous of a peaceful adjustment of the strife between the colonies and the mother country, and supposed this a propitious moment for a new attempt at pacification. He accordingly sent off General Sullivan on parole, charged with an overture to Congress. In this he declared himself empowered and disposed to compromise the dispute between Great Britain and America, on the most favorable terms, and, though he could not treat with Congress as a legally organized body, he was desirous of a conference with some of its members. These, for the time he should consider only as private gentlemen, but if in the conference any probable scheme of accommodation should be agreed upon, the authority of Congress would afterwards be acknowledged, to render the compact complete.*

The message caused some embarrassment in Congress. To accede to the interview might seem to waive the question of independence; to decline it was to shut the door on all hope of conciliation, and might alienate the coöperation of some worthy whigs who still clung to that hope. After much debate, Congress, on the 5th September, replied, that, being the representatives of the free and independent States of America, they could not send any members to confer with his lordship in their private characters, but that, ever desirous of establishing peace on

reasonable terms, they would send a committee of their body to ascertain what authority he had to treat with persons authorized by Congress, and what propositions he had to offer.

A committee was chosen on the 6th of September, composed of John Adams, Edward Rutledge and Doctor Franklin. The latter, in the preceding year, during his residence in England, had become acquainted with Lord Howe, at the house of his lordship's sister, the Honorable Mrs. Howe, and they had held frequent conversations on the subject of American affairs, in the course of which his lordship had intimated the possibility of his being sent commissioner to settle the differences in America.

Franklin had recently adverted to this in a letter to Lord Howe. "Your lordship may possibly remember the tears of joy that wet my cheek, when, at your good sister's in London, you gave me expectations that a reconciliation might soon take place. I had the misfortune to find those expectations disappointed.

"The well-founded esteem, and, permit me to say, affection, which I shall always have for your lordship, makes it painful for me to see you engaged in conducting a war, the great ground of which, as expressed in your letter, is 'the necessity of preventing the American trade from passing into foreign channels.' . . . I know your great motive in coming hither, was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and I believe that when you find *that* impossible on any terms given to you to propose, you will relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honorable private situation."

"I can have no difficulty to acknowledge," replied Lord Howe, "that the powers I am invested with were never calculated to negotiate a reunion with America under any other description than as subject to the crown of Great Britain. But I do esteem these powers competent, not only to confer and negotiate with any gentleman of influence in the colonies upon the terms, but also to effect a lasting peace and reunion between the two countries, were the tempers of the colonies such as professed in the last petition of Congress to the king."*

A hope of the kind lingered in the breast of his lordship when he sought the proposed conference. It was to take place on the 11th, at a house on Staten Island, opposite to Amboy; at which latter place the veteran Mercer was stationed with his flying camp. At Amboy, the committee found Lord Howe's

* *Franklin's Writings*, v. 103.

barge waiting to receive them; with a British officer of rank, who was to remain within the American lines during their absence as a hostage. This guarantee of safety was promptly declined, and the parties crossed together to Staten Island. The admiral met them on their landing and conducted them through his guards to his house.

On opening the conference, his lordship again intimated that he could not treat with them as a committee of Congress, but only confer with them as private gentlemen of influence in the colonies, on the means of restoring peace between the two countries.

The commissioners replied that, as their business was to hear he might consider them in what light he pleased; but that they should consider themselves in no other character than that in which they were placed by order of Congress.

Lord Howe then entered into a discourse of considerable length, but made no explicit proposition of peace, nor promise of redress of grievances, excepting on condition that the colonies should return to their allegiance.

This, the commissioners replied, was not now to be expected. Their repeated humble petitions to the king and parliament having been treated with contempt, and answered by additional injuries, and war having been declared against them, the colonies had declared their independence, and it was not in the power of Congress to agree for them that they should return to their former dependent state.*

His lordship expressed his sorrow that no accommodation was likely to take place; and, on breaking up the conference, assured his old friend, Dr. Franklin, that he should suffer great pain in being obliged to distress those for whom he had so much regard.

"I feel thankful to your lordship for your regard," replied Franklin good-humoredly; "the Americans, on their part, will endeavor to lessen the pain you may feel, by taking good care of themselves."

The result of this conference had a beneficial effect. It showed that his lordship had no power but what was given by the act of Parliament; and put an end to the popular notion that he was vested with secret powers to negotiate an adjustment of grievances.

* Report of the Commissioners to Congress, Sept. 13, 1776.

CHAPTER III.

MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY.—COUNCILS OF WAR.—QUESTION OF THE ABANDONMENT OF THE CITY.—DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARMY.—SHIPS IN THE EAST RIVER.—THE ENEMY AT HELL GATE.—SKIRMISH AT TURTLE BAY.—PANIC OF THE CONNECTICUT MILITIA.—RAGE AND PERSONAL PERIL OF WASHINGTON.—PUTNAM'S PERILOUS RETREAT FROM THE CITY.—BRITISH REGALE AT MURRAY HILL.

SINCE the retreat from Brooklyn, Washington had narrowly watched the movements of the enemy to discover their further plans. Their whole force, excepting about four thousand men, had been transferred from Staten to Long Island. A great part was encamped on the peninsula between Newtown Inlet and Flushing Bay. A battery had been thrown up near the extremity of the peninsula, to check an American battery at Horen's Hook opposite, and to command the mouth of Harlem River. Troops were subsequently stationed on the islands about Hell Gate. "It is evident," writes Washington, "the enemy mean to enclose us on the island of New York, by taking post in our rear, while the shipping secures the front, and thus, by cutting off our communication with the country, oblige us to fight them on their own terms, or surrender at discretion; or by a brilliant stroke endeavor to cut this army in pieces, and secure the collection of arms and stores, which, they well know, we shall not be able soon to replace."*

The question was, how could their plans be most successfully opposed? On every side, he saw a choice of difficulties; every measure was to be formed with some apprehension that all the troops would not do their duty. History, experience, the opinions of able friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, even the declarations of Congress, all concurred in demonstrating that the war on the American side should be defensive; a war of posts; that, on all occasions, a general action should be avoided, and nothing put at risk unnecessarily. "With these views," said Washington, "and being fully persuaded that it would be presumption to draw out our young troops into open ground

* Letter to the President of Congress.

against their superiors, both in number and discipline, I have never spared the spade and pickaxe."

In a council of war, held on the 7th of September, the question was discussed, whether the city should be defended or evacuated. All admitted that it would not be tenable, should it be cannonaded and bombarded. Several of the council, among whom was General Putnam, were for a total and immediate removal from the city; urging that one part of the army might be cut off before the other could support it; the extremities being at least sixteen miles apart, and the whole, when collected, being inferior to the enemy. By removing, they would deprive the enemy of the advantage of their ships; they would keep them at bay; put nothing at hazard; keep the army together to be recruited another year, and preserve the unspent stores and the heavy artillery. Washington himself inclined to this opinion. Others, however, were unwilling to abandon a place which had been fortified with great cost and labor and seemed defensible; and which, by some, had been considered the key to the northern country; it might dispirit the troops, and enfeeble the cause. General Mercer, who was prevented by illness from attending the council, communicated his opinion by letter. "We should keep New York if possible," said he, "as the acquiring of it will give eclat to the arms of Great Britain, afford the soldiers good quarters, and furnish a safe harbor for the fleet."

General Greene, also, being still unwell, conveyed his opinion in a letter to Washington, dated September 5th. He advised that the army should abandon both city and island, and post itself at King's Bridge and along the Westchester shore. That there was no object to be obtained by holding any position below King's Bridge. The enemy might throw troops on Manhattan Island, from their camps on Long Island, and their ships on the Hudson, and form an intrenched line across it, between the city and the middle division of the army, and support the two flanks of the line by their shipping. In such case, it would be necessary to fight them on disadvantageous terms or submit.

The city and island, he observed, were objects not to be put in competition with the general interests of America. Two thirds of the city and suburbs belonged to tories; there was no great reason, therefore, to run any considerable risk in its defense. The honor and interest of America required a general and speedy retreat. But as the enemy, once in possession, could never be dislodged without a superior naval force; as the place would furnish them with excellent winter quarters and

barrack room, and an abundant market, he advised to burn both city and suburbs before retreating.*

Well might the poor, harassed citizens feel hysterical, threatened as they were by sea and land, and their very defenders debating the policy of burning their houses over their heads. Fortunately for them, Congress had expressly forbidden that any harm should be done to New York, trusting, that though the enemy might occupy it for a time, it would ultimately be regained.

After much discussion a middle course was adopted. Putnam, with five thousand men, was to be stationed in the city. Heath, with nine thousand, was to keep guard on the upper part of the island, and oppose any attempt of the enemy to land. His troops, among whom were Magaw's, Shee's, Hand's, and Miles's Pennsylvania battalions, and Haslet's Delaware regiment, were posted about King's Bridge and its vicinity.

The third division, composed principally of militia, was under the command of Generals Greene and Spencer, the former of whom, however, was still unwell. It was stationed about the centre of the island, chiefly along Turtle Bay and Kip's Bay, where strong works had been thrown up, to guard against any landing of troops from the ships or from the encampments on Long Island. It was also to hold itself ready to support either of the other divisions. Washington himself had his head-quarters at a short distance from the city. A resolution of Congress, passed the 10th of September, left the occupation or abandonment of the city entirely at Washington's discretion. Nearly the whole of his officers, too, in a second council of war, retracted their former opinion, and determined that the removal of his army was not only prudent, but absolutely necessary. Three members of the council, however, Generals Spencer, Heath, and George Clinton, tenaciously held to the former decision.

Convinced of the propriety of evacuation, Washington prepared for it by ordering the removal of all stores, excepting such as were indispensable for the subsistence of the troops while they remained. A letter from a Rhode Island officer, on a visit to New York, gives an idea of its agitations. "On the 13th of September, just after dinner, three frigates and a forty-gun ship sailed up the East River with a gentle breeze, toward Hell Gate, and kept up an incessant fire, assisted by the cannon at Governor's Island. The batteries of the city returned the ships the like salutation. Three men agape, idle spectators, had the misfortune of being killed by one cannon ball. One shot struck with-

* *Force's Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 182.

in six feet of General Washington, as he was on horseback, riding into the fort." *

On the 14th, Washington's baggage was removed to King's Bridge, whither head-quarters were to be transferred the same evening, it being clear that the enemy were preparing to encompass him on the island. "It is now a trial of skill whether they will or not," writes Colonel Reed, "and every night we lie down with the most anxious fears for the fate of to-morrow." †

About sunset of the same day, six more ships, two of them men-of-war, passed up the Sound and joined those above. Within half an hour came expresses spurring to head-quarters, one from Mifflin at King's Bridge, the other from Colonel Sargent at Horen's Hook. Three or four thousand of the enemy were crossing at Hell Gate to the islands at the mouth of Harlem River, where numbers were already encamped. An immediate landing at Harlem, or Morrisania, was apprehended. Washington was instantly in the saddle, spurring to Harlem Heights. The night, however, passed away quietly. In the morning the enemy commenced operations. Three ships of war stood up the Hudson, "causing a most tremendous firing, assisted by the cannons of Governor's Island, which firing was returned from the city as well as the scarcity of heavy cannon would allow." ‡ The ships anchored opposite Bloomingdale, a few miles above the city, and put a stop to the removal by water of stores and provisions to Dobb's Ferry. About eleven o'clock, the ships in the East River commenced a heavy cannonade upon the breastworks between Turtle Bay and the city. At the same time two divisions of the troops encamped on Long Island, one British, under Sir Henry Clinton, the other Hessian, under Colonel Donop, emerged in boats from the deep, woody recesses of Newton Inlet, and under cover of the fire from the ships, began to land at two points between Turtle and Kip's Bays. The breastworks were manned by militia who had recently served at Brooklyn. Disheartened by their late defeat, they fled at the first advance of the enemy. Two brigades of Putnam's Connecticut troops (Parsons' and Fellows') which had been sent that morning to support them, caught the panic, and, regardless of the commands and entreaties of their officers, joined in the general scamper. At this moment Washington, who had mounted his horse at the first sound of the cannonade, came galloping to the scene of confusion; riding in among the fugitives, he endeavored to rally and restore them to order.

* Col. Babcock to Gov. Cook. *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 443.

† Reed to Mrs. Reed.

‡ Letter of Col. Babcock to Gov. Cooke.

All in vain. At the first appearance of sixty or seventy red-coats, they broke again without firing a shot, and fled in headlong terror. Losing all self-command at the sight of such dastardly conduct, he dashed his hat upon the ground in a transport of rage. "Are these the men," exclaimed he, "with whom I am to defend America!" In a paroxysm of passion and despair he snapped his pistols at some of them, threatened others with his sword, and was so heedless of his own danger, that he might have fallen into the hands of the enemy, who were not eighty yards distant, had not an aide-de-camp seized the bridle of his horse, and absolutely hurried him away.*

It was one of the rare moments of his life, when the vehement element of his nature was stirred up from its deep recesses. He soon recovered his self-possession, and took measures against the general peril. The enemy might land another force about Hell Gate, seize upon Harlem Heights, the strong central portion of the island, cut off all retreat of the lower divisions, and effectually sever his army. In all haste, therefore, he sent off an express to the forces encamped above, directing them to secure that position immediately; while another express to Putnam, ordered an immediate retreat from the city to those heights.

It was indeed a perilous moment. Had the enemy followed up their advantage, and seized upon the heights, before thus occupied; or had they extended themselves across the island, from the place where they had effected a landing, the result might have been most disastrous to the Americans. Fortunately, they contented themselves for the present with sending a strong detachment down the road along the East River, leading to the city, while the main body, British and Hessians, rested on their arms.

In the meantime, Putnam, on receiving Washington's express, called in his pickets and guards, and abandoned the city in all haste, leaving behind him a large quantity of provisions and military stores, and most of the heavy cannon. To avoid the enemy he took the Bloomingdale road, though this exposed him to be raked by the enemy's ships anchored in the Hudson. It was a forced march, on a sultry day, under a burning sun

* Graydon's *Memoirs*, Littell's ed., p. 174. General Greene, in a letter to a friend, writes: "We made a miserable, disorderly retreat from New York, owing to the conduct of the militia, who ran at the appearance of the enemy's advance guard. Fellows' and Parsons' brigades ran away from about fifty men, and left his Excellency on the ground, within eighty yards of the enemy, so vexed at the infamous conduct of his troops, that he sought death rather than life."

and amid clouds of dust. His army was encumbered with women and children and all kinds of baggage. Many were overcome by fatigue and thirst, some perished by hastily drinking cold water ; but Putnam rode backward and forward hurrying every one on.

Colonel Humphreys, at that time a volunteer in his division, writes : " I had frequent opportunities that day of beholding him, for the purpose of issuing orders and encouraging the troops, flying on his horse, covered with foam, wherever his presence was most necessary. Without his extraordinary exertions, the guards must have been inevitably lost, and it is probable the entire corps would have been cut in pieces.

" When we were not far from Bloomingdale, an aide-de-camp came to him at full speed, to inform him that a column of British infantry was descending upon our right. Our rear was soon fired upon, and the colonel of our regiment, whose order was just communicated for the front to file off to the left, was killed upon the spot. With no other loss, we joined the army after dark upon the heights of Harlem."*

Tradition gives a circumstance which favored Putnam's retreat. The British generals, in passing by Murray Hill, the country residence of a patriot of that name who was of the Society of Friends, made a halt to seek some refreshment. The proprietor of the house was absent ; but his wife set cake and wine before them in abundance. So grateful were these refreshments in the heat of the day, that they lingered over their wine, quaffing and laughing, and bantering their patriotic hostess about the ludicrous panic and discomfiture of her countrymen. In the meantime, before they were roused from their regale, Putnam and his forces had nearly passed by, within a mile of them. All the loss sustained by him in his perilous retreat, was about fifteen killed, and about three hundred taken prisoners. It became, adds the tradition, a common saying among the American officers, that Mrs. Murray saved Putnam's division of the army.†

* Peabody, *Life of Putnam*. Sparks' *Am. Biog.*, vii. 189.

† Thatcher's *Military Journal*, p. 70.

CHAPTER IV.

FORTIFIED CAMP AT KING'S BRIDGE—AMERICAN AND BRITISH LINES.—THE MORRIS HOUSE.—ALEXANDER HAMILTON.—THE ENEMY ADVANCE.—SUCCESSFUL SKIRMISH.—DEATH OF KNOWLTON.—GREAT FIRE IN NEW YORK.—REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY.—EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.—DANIEL MORGAN REGAINED.—DELANCEY'S TORY BRIGADE.—ROBERT ROGERS, THE PARTISAN.—HIS RANGERS.—THE "ROEBUCK," "PHENIX," AND "TARTAR" IN THE HUDSON.—MILITARY MOVEMENTS BY LAND AND WATER.—LETTER OF JOHN JAY.

THE fortified camp, where the main body of the army was now assembled, was upon that neck of land several miles long, and for the most part not above a mile wide, which forms the upper part of Manhattan or New York Island. It forms a chain of rocky heights, and is separated from the mainland by Harlem River, a narrow strait, extending from Hell Gate on the Sound, to Spyt den Duivel, a creek or inlet of the Hudson. Fort Washington occupied the crest of one of the rocky heights above mentioned, overlooking the Hudson, and about two miles north of it was King's Bridge, crossing Spyt den Duivel Creek, and forming at that time the only pass from Manhattan Island to the mainland.

About a mile and a half south of the fort, a double row of lines extended across the neck from Harlem River to the Hudson. They faced south towards New York, were about a quarter of a mile apart, and were defended by batteries.

There were strong advanced posts, about two miles south of the outer line; one on the left of Harlem, commanded by General Spencer, the other on the right, at what was called McGowan's Pass, commanded by General Putnam. About a mile and a half beyond these posts the British lines extended across the island from Horen's Hook to the Hudson, being a continuous encampment, two miles in length, with both flanks covered by shipping. An open plain intervened between the hostile camps.

Washington had established his head-quarters about a quarter of a mile within the inner line; at a country-seat, the owners of which were absent. It belonged in fact to Colonel Roger Morris, his early companion in arms in Braddock's campaign,

and his successful competitor for the hand of Miss Mary Philipse. Morris had remained in American, enjoying the wealth he had acquired by his marriage; but had adhered to the royal party, and was a member of the council of the colony. It is said that at this time he was residing in the Highlands at Beverley, the seat of his brother-in-law, Washington's old friend, Beverley Robinson.*

While thus posted, Washington was incessantly occupied in fortifying the approaches to his camp by redoubts, abatis, and deep intrenchments. "Here," said he, "I should hope the enemy, in case of attack, would meet a defeat, if the generality of our troops would behave with tolerable bravery; but experience, to my extreme affliction, has convinced me that it is rather to be wished than expected. However, I trust there are many who will act like men worthy of the blessings of freedom." The late disgraceful scene at Kip's Bay was evidently rankling in his mind.

In the course of his rounds of inspection, he was struck with the skill and science displayed in the construction of some of the works, which were thrown up under the direction of a youthful captain of artillery. It proved to be the same young officer, Alexander Hamilton, whom Greene had recommended to his notice. After some conversation with him, Washington invited him to his marquee, and thus commenced that intercourse which has indissolubly linked their memories together.

On the morning of the 16th, word was brought to headquarters that the enemy were advancing in three large columns. There had been so many false reports, that Reed, the adjutant-general, obtained leave to sally forth and ascertain the truth. Washington himself soon mounted his horse and rode towards the advanced posts. On arriving there he heard a brisk firing. It was kept up for a time with great spirit. There was evidently a sharp conflict. At length Reed came galloping back with information. A strong detachment of the enemy had attacked the most advanced post, which was situated on a hill skirted by a wood. It had been bravely defended by Lieutenant-colonel Knowlton, Putnam's favorite officer, who had distinguished himself at Bunker's Hill; he had under him a party of Connecticut rangers, volunteers from different regiments. After skirmishing for a time, the party had been overpowered by numbers and driven in, and the outpost was taken possession of by the enemy. Reed supposed the latter to be about three hun-

* The portrait of Miss Mary Philipse is still to be seen in the possession of Frederick Phillips, Esquire, at the Grange, on the Highlands opposite West Point.

dred strong, but they were much stronger, the main part having been concealed behind a rising ground in the wood. They were composed of a battalion of light infantry, another of Royal Highlanders, and three companies of Hessian riflemen; all under the command of General Leslie.

Reed urged that troops should be sent to support the brave fellows who had behaved so well. While he was talking with Washington, "the enemy," he says, "appeared in open view, and sounded their bugles in the most insulting manner, as usual after a fox-chase. I never," adds he, "felt such a sensation before; it seemed to crown our disgrace."

Washington, too, was stung by the taunting note of derision; it recalled the easy triumph of the enemy at Kip's Bay. Resolved that something should be done to wipe out that disgrace, and rouse the spirits of the army, he ordered out three companies from Colonel Weedon's regiment just arrived from Virginia, and sent them under Major Leitch, to join Knowlton's rangers. The troops thus united were to get in the rear of the enemy, while a feigned attack was made upon them in front.

The plan was partially successful. As the force advanced to make the false attack, the enemy ran down the hill, and took what they considered an advantageous position behind some fences and bushes which skirted it. A firing commenced between them and the advancing party, but at too great a distance to do much harm on either side. In the meantime, Knowlton and Leitch, ignorant of this change in the enemy's position, having made a circuit came upon them in flank instead of in rear. They were sharply received. A vivid contest took place, in which Connecticut vied with Virginia in bravery. In a little while Major Leitch received three bullets in his side, and was borne off the field. Shortly afterward, a wound in the head from a musket ball, brought Knowlton to the ground. Colonel Reed placed him on his horse, and conveyed him to a distant redoubt. The men, undismayed by the fall of their leaders, fought with unflinching resolution under the command of their captains. The enemy were reinforced by a battalion of Hessians and a company of chasseurs. Washington likewise sent reinforcements of New England and Maryland troops. The action waxed hotter and hotter; the enemy were driven from the wood into the plain, and pushed for some distance; the Americans were pursuing them with ardor, when Washington, having effected the object of this casual encounter, and being unwilling to risk a general action, ordered a retreat to be sounded.

It was with difficulty, however, his men could be called off, so excited were they by the novelty of pursuing an enemy.

They retired in good order; and, as it subsequently appeared, in good season, for the main body of the enemy were advancing at a rapid rate, and might have effectually reversed the scene.

Colonel Knowlton did not long survive the action. "When gasping in the agonies of death," says Colonel Reed, "all his inquiry was whether he had driven in the enemy." He was anxious for the tarnished honor of Connecticut. He had the dying satisfaction of knowing that his men had behaved bravely, and driven the enemy in an open field-fight. So closed his gallant career.

The encounter thus detailed was a small affair in itself, but important in its effects. It was the first gleam of success in the campaign, and revived the spirits of the army. Washington sought to turn it to the greatest advantage. In his general orders, he skillfully distributed praise and censure. The troops under Leitch were thanked for being the first to advance upon the enemy; and the New England troops for gallantly supporting them; and their conduct was honorably contrasted with that of the recreant troops at Kip's Bay. Of Knowlton, who had fallen while gloriously fighting, he spoke as "one who would have done honor to any country."

The name of Leitch was given by him for the next day's parole. That brave officer died of his wounds on the 1st of October, soothed in his last moments by that recompense so dear to a soldier's heart, the encomium of a beloved commander.

In the dead of the night, on the 20th of September, a great light was beheld by the picket guards, looming up from behind the hills in the direction of the city. It continued throughout the night, and was at times so strong that the heavens in that direction appeared to them, they said, as if in flames. At daybreak huge columns of smoke were still rising. It was evident there had been a great conflagration in New York.

In the course of the morning Captain Montresor, aide-de-camp to General Howe, came out with a flag, bearing a letter to Washington on the subject of an exchange of prisoners. According to Montresor's account a great part of the city had been burnt down, and as the night was extremely windy, the whole might have been so, but for the exertions of the officers and men of the British army. He implied it to be the act of American incendiaries, several of whom, he informed Colonel Reed, had been caught in the fact and instantly shot. General Howe, in his private correspondence, makes the same assertion, and says they were detected, and killed on the spot by the enraged troops in garrison.

Enraged troops, with weapons in their hands, are not apt, in

a time of confusion and alarm, to be correct judges of fact, or dispensers of justice. The act was always disclaimed by the Americans, and it is certain their commanders knew nothing about it. We have shown that the destruction of the city was at one time discussed in a council of war as a measure of policy, but never adopted, and was expressly forbidden by Congress.

The enemy were now bringing up their heavy cannon, preparatory to an attack upon the American camp by the troops and by the ships. What was the state of Washington's army? The terms of engagement of many of his men would soon be at an end, most of them would terminate with the year, nor did Congress hold out offers to encourage reënlistments. "We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of the army," writes he, "and unless some speedy and effectual measures are adopted by Congress, our cause will be lost." Under these gloomy apprehensions, he borrowed, as he said, "a few moments from the hours allotted to sleep," and on the night of the 24th of September, penned an admirable letter to the President of Congress, setting forth the total inefficiency of the existing military system, the total insubordination, waste, confusion, and discontent produced by it among the men, and the harassing cares and vexations to which it subjected the commanders. Nor did he content himself with complaining, but in his full, clear, and sagacious manner, pointed out the remedies. To the achievements of his indefatigable pen, we may trace the most fortunate turns in the current of our revolutionary affairs. In the present instance his representations, illustrated by sad experience, produced at length a reorganization of the army, and the establishment of it on a permanent footing. It was decreed that eighty-eight battalions should be furnished in quotas, by the different States, according to their abilities. The pay of the officers was raised. The troops which engaged to serve throughout the war were to receive a bounty of twenty dollars and one hundred acres of land, besides a yearly suit of clothes while in service. Those who enlisted for but three years, received no bounty in land. The bounty to officers was on a higher ratio. The States were to send commissioners in the army, to arrange with the commander-in-chief as to the appointment of officers in their quotas; but, as they might occasionally be slow in complying with this regulation, Washington was empowered to fill up all vacancies.

All this was a great relief to his mind. He was gratified, also, by effecting, after a long correspondence with the British commander, an exchange of prisoners, in which those captured in Canada were included. Among those restored to the service

were Lord Stirling and Captain Daniel Morgan. The latter, in reward of his good conduct in the expedition with Arnold, and of "his intrepid behavior in the assault upon Quebec where the brave Montgomery fell," was recommended to Congress by Washington for the command of a rifle regiment about to be raised. We shall see how eminently he proved himself worthy of this recommendation.

About this time information was received that the enemy were enlisting great numbers of the loyalists of Long Island, and collecting large quantities of stock for their support. Oliver De Lancey, a leading loyalist of New York, member of a wealthy family of honorable Huguenot descent, was a prime agent in the matter. He had recently been appointed brigadier-general in the royal service, and authorized by General Howe to raise a brigade of provincials; and was actually at Jamaica, on Long Island, offering commissions of captain, lieutenant, and ensign, to any respectable person who should raise a company of seventy men; the latter to receive British pay.

A descent upon Long Island, to counteract these projects, was concerted by General George Clinton of New York, and General Lincoln of Massachusetts, but men and water craft were wanting to carry it into effect, and the "tory enlistments continued." They were not confined to Long Island, but prevailed more or less on Staten Island, in the Jerseys, up the Hudson as far as Dutchess County, and in Westchester County, more especially. Many of the loyalists, it must be acknowledged, were honorable men, conscientiously engaged in the service of their sovereign, and anxious to put down what they sincerely regarded as an unjustifiable rebellion; and among these may be clearly classed the De Lanceys. There were others, however, of a different stamp, the most notorious of whom, at this juncture, was one Robert Rogers of New Hampshire. He had been a worthy comrade of Putnam and Stark, in some of their early enterprises during the French war, and had made himself famous as major of a partisan corps called Rogers' Rangers. Governor Trumbull described him as a "famous scout and wood-hunter skilled in waylaying, ambuscade, and sudden attack." His feats of arms had evidently somewhat of the Indian character. He had since been governor of Michilimackinac (1766), and accused of a plot to plunder his own fort and join the French. At the outbreak of the Revolution he played a skulking, equivocal part and appeared ready to join either party. In 1775, Washington had received notice that he was in Canada, in the service of Carleton, and had been as a spy, disguised as an Indian, through the American camp at St. John's.

Recently, on learning that he was prowling about the country under suspicious circumstances, Washington had caused him to be arrested. On examination, he declared that he was on his way to offer his secret services to Congress. He was accordingly sent on to that body, in custody of an officer. Congress liberated him on his pledging himself in writing, "on the honor of a gentleman," not to bear arms against the American United Colonies in any manner whatever, during the contest with Great Britain.

Scarcely was he liberated when he forfeited his parole, offered his services to the enemy, received a colonel's commission, and was now actually raising a tory corps to be called the Queen's Rangers. All such as should bring recruits to his standard were promised commissions, portions of rebel lands, and privileges equal to any of His Majesty's troops.

Of all Americans of note enlisted under the royal standard, this man had rendered himself the most odious. He was stigmatized as an arrant renegade, a perfect Judas Iscariot; and his daring, adventurous spirit and habits of Indian warfare rendered him a formidable enemy.

Nothing perplexed Washington at this juncture more than the conduct of the enemy. He beheld before him a hostile army, armed and equipped at all points, superior in numbers, thoroughly disciplined, flushed with success, and abounding in the means of pushing a vigorous campaign, yet suffering day after day to elapse unimproved. What could be the reason of this supineness on the part of Sir William Howe? He must know the depressed and disorganized state of the American camp; the absolute chaos that reigned there. Did he meditate an irruption into the Jerseys? A movement towards Philadelphia? Did he intend to detach a part of his forces for a winter's campaign against the South?

In this uncertainty, Washington wrote to General Mercer, of the flying camp, to keep a vigilant watch from the Jersey shore on the movements of the enemy, by sea and land, and to station videttes on the Neversink Heights, to give immediate intelligence should any of the British fleet put to sea. At the same time he himself practiced unceasing vigilance, visiting the different parts of his camp on horseback. Occasionally he crossed over to Fort Constitution, on the Jersey shore, of which General Greene had charge, and, accompanied by him, extended his reconnoiterings down to Paulus Hook, to observe what was going on in the city and among the enemy's ships. Greene had recently been promoted to the rank of major-general, and now had command of all the troops in the Jerseys. He had liberty

to shift his quarters to Baskingridge or Bergen, as circumstances might require; but was enjoined to keep up a communication with the main army, east of the Hudson, so as to secure a retreat in case of necessity.

The security of the Hudson was at this time an object of great solicitude with Congress, and much reliance was placed on Putnam's obstructions at Fort Washington. Four galleys, mounted with heavy guns and swivels, were stationed at the chevaux-de-frise, and two new ships were at hand, which, filled with stones, were to be sunk where they would block up the channel. A sloop was also at anchor, having on board a machine, invented by a Mr. Bushnell, for submarine explosion, with which to blow up the men-of-war; a favorite scheme with General Putnam. The obstructions were so commanded by batteries on each shore, that it was thought no hostile ship would be able to pass.

On the 9th of October, however, the *Roebuck* and *Phoenix*, each of forty-four guns, and the *Tartar* of twenty guns, which had been lying for some time opposite Bloomingdale, got under way with their three tenders, at eight o'clock in the morning, and came standing up the river with an easy southern breeze. At their approach, the galleys and the two ships intended to be sunk, got under way with all haste, as did a schooner laden with rum, sugar, and other supplies for the American army, and the sloop with Bushnell's submarine machine.

The *Roebuck*, *Phoenix*, and *Tartar*, broke through the vaunted barriers as through a cobweb. Seven batteries kept a constant fire upon them, yet a gentleman was observed walking the deck of the second ship as coolly as if nothing were the matter.* Washington, indeed, in a letter to Schuyler, says "they passed without any kind of damage or interruption;" but Lord Howe reports to the admiralty that they suffered much in their masts and rigging, and that a lieutenant, two midshipmen, and six men were killed, and eighteen wounded.

The hostile ships kept on their course, the American vessels scudding before them. The schooner was overhauled and captured; a well-aimed shot sent the sloop and Bushnell's submarine engine to the bottom of the river. The two new ships would have taken refuge in Spyt den Duivel Creek, but, fearing there might not be water enough, they kept on and drove ashore at Philips' Mills at Yonkers. Two of the galleys got into a place of safety, where they were protected from the shore; the other two trusted to outsail their pursuers. The breeze freshened, and the frigates gained on them fast; at 11

* Col. Ewing to the Maryland Committee of Safety.

o'clock began to fire on them with their bow-chasers, and at 12 o'clock overreached them, which caused them to bear in shore; at half-past one the galleys ran aground just above Dobb's Ferry, and lay exposed to a shower of grape-shot. The crews, without stopping to burn or bilge them, swam on shore, and the enemy took possession of the two galleys, which were likely to be formidable means of annoyance in their hands.

One express after another brought Washington word of these occurrences. First, he sent off a party of rifle and artillery men, with two twelve-pounders, to secure the new ships which had run aground at Yonkers. Next, he ordered Colonel Sargent to march up along the eastern shore with five hundred infantry, a troop of light horse, and a detachment of artillery, to prevent the landing of the enemy. Before the troops arrived at Dobb's Ferry the ships' boats had plundered a store there, and set it on fire.

To prevent, if possible, the men-of-war already up the river from coming down, or others from below joining them, Washington gave orders to complete the obstructions. Two hulks which lay in Spyt den Duivel Creek, were hastily ballasted by men from General Heath's division, and men were sent up to get off the ships which had run aground at Philips' Mills, that they might be brought down and sunk immediately.

It is difficult to give an idea of the excitement caused by this new irruption of hostile ships into the waters of the Hudson or of the various conjectures as to their object. They might intend merely to interrupt navigation, and prevent supplies from coming down to the American army. They might be carrying arms and ammunition for domestic enemies skulking about the river, and only waiting an opportunity to strike a blow. They might have troops concealed on board with intent to surprise the posts in the Highlands, and cut off the intercourse between the American armies. To such a degree had the spirit of disaffection been increased in the counties adjacent to the river, since the descent of the *Rose*, and *Phoenix*, by the retreats and evacuation which had taken place, and so great had been the drain on the militia of those counties for the army of Washington, that, in case of insurrection, those who remained at home and were well affected, would be outnumbered, and might easily be overpowered, especially with the aid of troops landed from ships.

While this agitation prevailed below, fugitive river crafts carried the news up to the Highlands that the frigates were already before Tarrytown in the Tappan Sea. Word was instantly despatched to Peter R. Livingston, president of the Provincial Congress, and startled that deliberative body, which was

then seated at Fishkill just above the Highlands. The Committee of Safety wrote, on the spur of the moment, to Washington. "Nothing," say they, "can be more alarming than the present situation of our State. We are daily getting the most authentic intelligence of bodies of men enlisted and armed in order to assist the enemy. We much fear that they, coöperating with the enemy, may seize such passes as will cut off the communication between the army and us, and prevent your supplies. . . . We beg leave to suggest to your Excellency the propriety of sending a body of men to the Highlands or Peekskill, to secure the passes, prevent insurrection, and overawe the disaffected."

Washington transmitted the letter to the President of Congress on the 12th. "I have ordered up," writes he, "part of the militia from Massachusetts, under General Lincoln, to prevent, if possible, the consequences which they suggest may happen, and which there is reason to believe the conspirators have in contemplation. I am persuaded that they are on the eve of breaking out, and that they will leave nothing unessayed that will distress us, and favor the designs of the enemy, as soon as their schemes are ripe for it." In fact, it was said that the tories were arming and collecting in the Highlands under the direction of disguised officers, to aid the conspiracies formed by Governor Tryon and his adherents.

As a further precaution, an express was sent off by Washington to Colonel Tash, who, with a regiment of New Hampshire militia, was on his way from Hartford to the camp, ordering him to repair with all possible despatch to Fishkill, and there hold himself at the disposition of the Committee of Safety.

James Clinton, also, who had charge of the posts in the Highlands, was put on the alert. That trusty officer was now a brigadier-general, having been promoted by Congress, on the 8th of August. He was charged to have all boats passing up and down the river rigidly searched, and the passengers examined. Beside the usual sentries, a barge, well manned, was to patrol the river opposite to each fort every night; all barges, row-boats, and other small craft, between the forts, in the Highlands and the army, were to be secured in a place of safety, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands and giving intelligence. Moreover, a French engineer was sent up to aid in strengthening and securing the passes. The commanding officers of the counties of Litchfield and Fairfield in Connecticut, had, likewise, orders to hold their militia in readiness to render assistance in case of insurrections in the State of New York.

So perilous appeared the condition of affairs to residents up

the river, that John Jay, a member of the New York Convention, and one of the secret committee for the defense of the Hudson, applied for leave of absence, that he might remove his aged parents to a place of safety. A letter from him to Edward Rutledge, of the Board of War, contains this remarkable sentence: "I wish our army well stationed in the Highlands and all the lower country desolated; we might then bid defiance to all the further efforts of the enemy in that quarter."

Nor was this a random or despairing wish. It shows a brave spirit of a leading civilian of the day, and the sacrifices that true patriots were disposed to make in the cause of independence.

But a few days previously he had held the following language to Gouverneur Morris, chairman of a special committee: "Had I been vested with absolute power in this State, I have often said, and still think, that I would last spring have desolated all *Long Island*, *Staten Island*, the city and county of *New York*, and all that part of the county of *Westchester* which lies below the mountains. I would then have stationed the main body of the army in the mountains on the east, and eight or ten thousand men in the Highlands on the west side of the river. I would have directed the river at *Fort Montgomery*, which is nearly at the southern extremity of the mountains, to be so shallowed as to afford only depth sufficient for an *Albany* sloop, and all the southern passes and defiles in the mountains so be strongly fortified. Nor do I think the shallowing of the river a romantic scheme. Rocky mountains rise immediately from the shores. The breadth is not very great, though the depth is. But what cannot eight or ten thousand men, well worked, effect? According to this plain of defense the State would be absolutely impregnable against all the world, on the seaside, and would have nothing to fear except from the way of the lake. Should the enemy gain the river, even below the mountains, I think I foresee that a retreat would become necessary, and I can't forbear wishing that a desire of saving a few acres may not lead us into difficulties."*

Three days after this remarkable letter was written, the enemy's ships did gain the river; and two days afterwards, October 11th, Reed, the adjutant-general, the confidant of Washington's councils, writes to his wife from Harlem Heights: "My most sanguine views do not extend further than keeping our ground here till this campaign closes. If the enemy incline to press us, it is resolved to risk an engagement, for, if we cannot

fight them on this ground, we can on none in America. The ships are the only circumstances unfavorable to us here."

On the same day that this letter was written, a small vessel, sloop-rigged, with a topsail was descried from Fort Washington, coming down the river with a fresh breeze. It was suspected by those on the look-out to be one of the British tenders, and they gave it a shot from a twelve-pounder. Their aim was unfortunately too true. Three of the crew were killed and the captain wounded. It proved to be Washington's yacht, which had run up the river previously to the enemy's ships, and was now on its return.*

CHAPTER V.

LEE EXPECTED IN CAMP.—HIS LETTER OF ADVICE TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.—THE ENEMY AT THROG'S NECK.—WASHINGTON'S ARRANGEMENTS.—RIDES TO THROG'S NECK.—THE ENEMY BROUGHT TO A STAND.—MILITARY MOVEMENTS.—ARRIVAL OF LEE.—A COMMAND ASSIGNED TO HIM.—CRITICISES THE CONDUCT OF CONGRESS AND THE ARMY.—COUNCIL OF WAR.—THE ARMY TO MOVE TO THE MAINLAND.—FORT WASHINGTON TO BE KEPT UP.

"If General Lee should be in Philadelphia," writes John Jay to Rutledge, "pray hasten his departure—he is much wanted at New York." The successes of Lee at the south were contrasted by many with the defeat on Long Island, and evacuation of New York, and they began to consider him the main hope of the army. Hazard, the postmaster, writing from Harlem Heights to General Gates on the 11th, laments it as a misfortune that Lee should have been to the southward for several months past, but adds cheerily, "he is expected here to-day."

Joseph Trumbull, the commissary-general, also writes to Gates, under the same date: "General Lee is to be here this evening. He left Philadelphia on the 8th."

Lee, the object of so many hopes, was actually in the Jerseys, on his way to the camp. He writes from Amboy on the 12th, to the President of Congress, informing him that the Hessians, encamped opposite on Staten Island, had disappeared on the preceding night, quitting the island entirely, and some great measure was believed to be in agitation. "I am confident," writes he, "they will not attack General Washington's

* Heath's *Memoirs*.

lines; such a measure is too absurd for a man of Mr. Howe's genius; and unless they have received flattering accounts from Burgoyne, that he will be able to effectuate a junction (which I conceive they have not), they will no longer remain kicking their heels at New York. They will put the place in a respectable state of defense, which, with their command of the waters, may be easily done, leave four or five thousand men, and direct their operations to a more decisive object. They will infallibly proceed either immediately up the river Delaware with their whole troops, or, what is more probable, land somewhere about South Amboy or Shrewsbury, and march straight to Trenton or Burlington. On the supposition that this will be the case, what are we to do? What force have we? What means have we to prevent their possessing themselves of Philadelphia? General Washington's army cannot possibly keep pace with them. The length of his route is not only infinitely greater, but his obstructions almost insuperable. In short, before he could cross Hudson River, they might be lodged and strongly fortified on both banks of the Delaware. . . . For Heaven's sake arouse yourselves! For Heaven's sake let ten thousand men be immediately assembled, and stationed somewhere about Trenton. In my opinion, your whole depends upon it. I set out immediately for head-quarters, where I shall communicate my apprehension that such will be the next operation of the enemy, and urge the expediency of sparing a part of his army (if he has any to spare) for this object." *

On the very morning that Lee was writing this letter at Amboy, Washington received intelligence by express from General Heath, stationed above King's Bridge, that the enemy were landing with artillery on Throg's Neck † in the Sound, about nine miles from the camp. Washington surmised that Howe was pursuing his original plan of getting into the rear of the American army, cutting off its supplies, which were chiefly derived from the East, and interrupting its communication with the main country. Officers were ordered to their alarm posts, and the troops to be ready, under arms, to act as occasion might require. Word, at the same time, was sent to General Heath, to dispose of the troops on his side of King's Bridge, and of two militia regiments posted on the banks of Harlem River opposite the camp, in such manner as he should think necessary.

Having made all his arrangements as promptly as possible,

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 1008.

† Properly Throck's Neck, from Throckmorton, the name of the original proprietor.

Washington mounted his horse, and rode over towards Throg's Neck to reconnoiter.

Throg's Neck is a peninsula in Westchester County, stretching upwards of two miles into the Sound. It was separated from the mainland by a narrow creek and a marsh, and was surrounded by water every high tide. A bridge across a creek connecting with a ruined causeway across the marsh, led to the mainland, and the upper end of the creek was fordable at low water. Early in the morning, eighty or ninety boats full of men had stood up the Sound from Montresor's Island, and Long Island, and had landed troops to the number of four thousand on Throg's Point, the extremity of the Neck. Thence their advance pushed forward toward the causeway and bridge, to secure that pass to the mainland. General Heath had been too rapid for them. Colonel Hand and his Philadelphia riflemen, the same who had checked the British advance on Long Island, had taken up the planks of the bridge, and posted themselves opposite the end of the causeway, whence they commenced firing with their rifles. They were soon reinforced by Colonel Prescott, of Bunker's Hill renown, with his regiment, and Lieutenant Bryant of the artillery, with a three-pounder. Checked at this pass, the British moved toward the head of the creek; here they found the Americans in possession of the ford, where they were reinforced by Colonel Graham, of the New York line, with his regiment, and Lieutenant Jackson of the artillery, with a six-pounder. These skillful dispositions of his troops by General Heath had brought the enemy to a stand. By the time Washington arrived in the vicinity, the British had encamped on the Neck; the riflemen and yagers keeping up a scattering fire at each other across the marsh; and Captain Bryant now and then saluting the enemy with his field-piece.

Having surveyed the ground, Washington ordered works to be thrown up at the passes from the Neck to the mainland. The British also threw up a work at the end of the causeway. In the afternoon nine ships, with a great number of schooners, sloops, and flat-bottomed boats full of men, passed through Hell Gate, towards Throg's Point; and information received from two deserters, gave Washington reason to believe that the greater part of the enemy's forces were gathering in that quarter. General McDougall's brigade, in which were Colonel Smallwood and the independent companies, was sent in the evening to strengthen Heath's division at King's Bridge, and to throw up works opposite the ford of Harlem River. Greene, who had heard of the landing of the enemy at Throg's Neck,

wrote over to Washington, from Fort Constitution, informing him that he had three brigades ready to join him if required. "If the troops are wanted over your side," said he, "or likely to be so, they should be got over in the latter part of the night, as the shipping may move up from below, and impede, if not totally stop the troops from passing. The tents upon Staten Island," he added, "had all been struck, as far as could be ascertained." It was plain the whole scene of action was changing.

On the 14th, General Lee arrived in camp, where he was welcomed as the harbinger of good luck. Washington was absent, visiting the posts beyond King's Bridge, and the passes leading from Throg's Neck; Lee immediately rode forth to join him. No one gave him a sincerer greeting than the commander-in-chief, who, diffident of his own military knowledge, had a high opinion of that of Lee. He immediately gave him command of the troops above King's Bridge, now the greatest part of the army, but desired that he would not exercise it for a day or two, until he had time to acquaint himself with the localities and arrangements of the post; Heath, in the interim, held the command.

Lee was evidently elevated by his successes at the South, and disposed to criticise disparagingly the military operations of other commanders. In a letter, written on the day of his arrival to his old associate in arms, General Gates, he condemns the position of the army, and censures Washington for submitting to the dictation of Congress, whose meddlesome instructions had produced it. "*Inter nos*," writes he, "the Congress seem to stumble every step. I do not mean one or two of the cattle, but the whole stable. I have been very free in delivering my opinion to them. In my opinion General Washington is much to blame in not menacing 'em with resignation, unless they refrain from unhinging the army by their absurd interference.

"Keep us Ticonderoga; much depends upon it. We ought to have an army in the Delaware. I have roared it in the ears of Congress, but *earent auribus*. Adieu, my dear friend; if we do meet again—why, we shall smile." *

In the meantime, Congress, on the 11th of October, having heard of the ingress of the *Phoenix*, *Roebuck* and *Tartar*, passed a resolution that General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River between Fort Washington and Fort Constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's vessels lately gone up as to hinder them from receiving succors.

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 1038.

Under so many conflicting circumstances, Washington held a council of war on the 16th, at Lee's head-quarters, at which all the major-generals were present, excepting Greene, and all the brigadiers, as well as Colonel Knox, who commanded the artillery. Letters from the Convention and from individual members of it were read, concerning the turbulence of the disaffected in the upper parts of the State; intelligence gained from deserters was likewise stated, showing the intention of the enemy to surround the camp. The policy was then discussed of remaining in their present position on Manhattan Island, and awaiting there the menaced attack: the strength of the position was urged; its being well fortified, and extremely difficult of access. Lee, in reply, scoffed at the idea of a position being good merely because its approaches were difficult. How could they think of holding a position where the enemy were so strong in front and rear; where ships had the command of the water on each side, and where King's Bridge was their only pass by which to escape from being wholly inclosed? Had not their recent experience on Long Island and at New York taught them the danger of such positions? "For my part," said he, "I would have nothing to do with the islands to which you have been clinging so pertinaciously—I would give Mr. Howe a fee-simple of them."

"After much consideration and debate," says the record of the council, "the following question was stated: Whether (it having appeared that the obstructions in the North River have proved insufficient, and that the enemy's whole force is now in our rear on Frog Point) it is now deemed possible, in our situation, to prevent the enemy from cutting off the communication with the country, and compelling us to fight them at all disadvantages or surrender prisoners at discretion?"

All agreed, with but one dissenting voice, that it was not possible to prevent the communication from being cut off, and that one of the consequences mentioned in the question must follow.

The dissenting voice was that of General George Clinton, a brave downright man, but little versed in the science of warfare. He could not comprehend the policy of abandoning so strong a position; they were equal in number to the enemy, and as they must fight them somewhere, could do it to more advantage there than anywhere else. Clinton felt as a guardian of the Hudson and the upper country, and wished to meet the enemy, as it were, at the very threshold.

As the resolve of Congress seemed imperative with regard to Fort Washington, that post, it was agreed, should "be retained as long as possible"

A strong garrison was accordingly placed in it, composed chiefly of troops from Magaw's and Shee's Pennsylvania regiments, the latter under Lieutenant-colonel Lambert Cadwalader, of Philadelphia. Shee having obtained leave of absence, Colonel Magaw was put in command of the post, and solemnly charged by Washington to defend it to the last extremity: The name of the opposite post on the Jersey shore, where Greene was stationed, was changed from Fort Constitution to Fort Lee, in honor of the general. Lee, in fact, was the military idol of the day. Even the family of the commander-in-chief joined in paying him homage. Colonel Tench Tilghman, Washington's aide-de-camp, in a letter to a friend, writes: "You ask if General Lee is in health, and our people bold. I answer both in the affirmative. His appearance amongst us has contributed not a little to the latter."

CHAPTER VI.

ARMY ARRANGEMENTS.—WASHINGTON AT WHITE PLAINS.—THE ENEMY AT THROG'S POINT.—SKIRMISH OF COLONEL GLOVER.—ATTEMPT TO SURPRISE ROGERS, THE RENEGADE.—TROOPERS IN A ROUGH COUNTRY.—ALARMS AT WHITE PLAINS.—CANNONADING OF SHIPS AT FORT WASHINGTON.—MARCH OF LEE.—FORTIFIED CAMP AT WHITE PLAINS.—RECONNOITERING.—THE AFFAIR AT CHATTERTON'S HILL.—RELATIVE SITUATION OF THE ARMIES.—CHANGE OF POSITION.—CONTRAST OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE TROOPS.—GEORGE CLINTON'S IDEA OF STRATEGY.—MOVEMENT OF THE BRITISH ARMY.—INCENDIARIES AT WHITE PLAINS.

PREVIOUS to decamping from Manhattan Island, Washington formed four divisions of the army, which were respectively assigned to Generals Lee, Heath, Sullivan (recently obtained in exchange for General Prescott), and Lincoln. Lee was stationed on Valentine's Hill on the mainland, immediately opposite King's Bridge, to cover the transportation across it of the military stores and heavy baggage. The other divisions were to form a chain of fortified posts, extending about thirteen miles along a ridge of hills on the west side of the Bronx, from Lee's camp up to the village of White Plains.

Washington's head-quarters continued to be on Harlem Heights for several days, during which time he was continually

in the saddle, riding about a broken, woody, and half wild country, forming posts, and choosing sites for breastworks and redoubts. By his skillful disposition of the army, it was protected in its whole length by the Bronx, a narrow but deep stream, fringed with trees, which ran along the foot of the ridge; at the same time his troops faced and outflanked the enemy, and covered the roads along which the stores and baggage had to be transported. On the 21st, he shifted his head-quarters to Valentine's Hill, and on the 23d to White Plains, where he stationed himself in a fortified camp.

While he was thus incessantly in action, General, now Sir William Howe (having recently, in reward for his services, been made a knight companion of the Bath), remained for six days passive in his camp on Throg's Point awaiting the arrival of supplies and reinforcements, instead of pushing across to the Hudson, and throwing himself between Washington's army and the upper country. His inaction lost him a golden opportunity. By the time his supplies arrived, the Americans had broken up the causeway leading to the mainland, and taken positions too strong to be easily forced.

Finding himself headed in this direction, Sir William re-embarked part of his troops in flat boats on the 18th, crossed Eastchester Bay, and landed on Pell's Point, at the mouth of Hutchinson's River. Here he was joined in a few hours by the main body, with the baggage and artillery and proceeded through the manor of Pelham towards New Rochelle; still with a view to get above Washington's army.

In their march, the British were waylaid and harassed by Colonel Glover of Massachusetts, with his own, Reed's, and Shepard's regiments of infantry. Twice the British advance guard were thrown into confusion and driven back with severe loss, by a sharp fire from behind stone fences. A third time they advanced in solid columns. The Americans gave them repeated volleys, and then retreated with the loss of eight killed and thirteen wounded, among whom was Colonel Shepard. Colonel Glover, and the officers and soldiers who were with him in this skirmish, received the public thanks of Washington for their merit and good behavior.

On the 21st, General Howe was encamped about two miles north of New Rochelle, with his outposts extending to Mamaroneck on the Sound. At the latter place was posted Colonel Rogers, the renegade, as he was called, with the Queen's Rangers, his newly-raised corps of loyalists.

Hearing of this, Lord Stirling resolved, if possible, to cut off this outpost and entrap the old hunter. Colonel Haslet, of his

brigade, always prompt on such occasions, undertook the exploit at the head of seven hundred and fifty of the Delaware troops, who had fought so bravely on Long Island. With these he crossed the line of the British march, came undiscovered upon the post, drove in the guard, killed a lieutenant and several men, and brought away thirty-six prisoners, with a pair of colors, sixty stands of arms, and other spoils. He missed the main prize, however. Rogers skulked off in the dark at the first fire. He was too old a partisan to be easily entrapped.

For this exploit, Colonel Haslet and his men were publicly thanked by Lord Stirling, on parade.

These, and other spirited and successful skirmishes, while they retarded the advance of the enemy, had the far more important effect of exercising and animating the American troops, and accustomed them to danger.

While in this neighborhood, Howe was reinforced by a second division of Hessians under General Knyphausen, and a regiment of Waldeckers, both of which had recently arrived in New York. He was joined, also, by the whole of the seventeenth light dragoons, and a part of the sixteenth, which had arrived on the 3d instant from Ireland, with Lieutenant-colonel (afterwards Earl) Harcourt. Some of their horses had been brought with them across the sea, others had been procured since their arrival.

The Americans at first regarded these troopers with great dread. Washington, therefore, took pains to convince them, that in a rough, broken country, like the present, full of stone fences, no troops were so inefficient as cavalry. They could be waylaid and picked off by sharpshooters from behind walls and thickets, while they could not leave the road to pursue their covert foe.

Further to inspirit them against this new enemy, he proclaimed, in general orders, a reward of one hundred dollars for every trooper brought in with his horse and accoutrements, and so on, in proportion to the completeness of the capture.

On the 25th, about two o'clock in the afternoon, intelligence was brought to headquarters that three or four detachments of the enemy were on the march, within four miles of the camp, and the main army following in columns. The drums beat to arms; the men were ordered to their posts; an attack was expected. The day passed away, however, without any demonstration of the enemy. Howe detached none of his force on lateral expeditions, evidently meditating a general engagement. To prepare for it, Washington drew all his troops from the posts along the Bronx into the fortified camp at White

Plains. Here everything remained quiet but expectant, throughout the 26th. In the morning of the 27th, which was Sunday, the heavy booming of cannon was heard from a distance, seemingly in the direction of Fort Washington. Scouts galloped off to gain intelligence. We will anticipate their report.

Two of the British frigates, at seven o'clock in the morning, had moved up the Hudson, and come to anchor near Burdett's Ferry, below the Morris House, Washington's old head-quarters, apparently with the intention of stopping the ferry, and cutting off the communication between Fort Lee and Fort Washington. At the same time, troops made their appearance on Harlem Plains, where Lord Percy held command. Colonel Morgan immediately manned the lines with troops from the garrison of Fort Washington. The ships opened a fire to enfilade and dislodge them. A barbette battery on the cliffs of the Jersey shore, left of the ferry, fired down upon the frigates, but with little effect. Colonel Magaw got down an eighteen pounder to the lines near the Morris House, and fired fifty or sixty rounds, two balls at a time. Two eighteen-pounders were likewise brought down from Fort Lee, and planted opposite the ships. By the fire from both shores, they were hulled repeatedly.

It was the thundering of these cannonades which had reached Washington's camp at White Plains, and even startled the Highlands of the Hudson. The ships soon hoisted all sail. The foremost slipped her cable, and appeared to be in the greatest confusion. She could make no way, though towed by two boats. The other ship seeing her distress, sent two barges to her assistance, and by the four boats she was dragged out of reach of the American fire, her pumps going all the time. "Had the tide been flood one half hour longer," writes General Greene, "we should have sunk her."

At the time that the fire from the ships began, Lord Percy brought up his field-pieces and mortars, and made an attack upon the lines. He was resolutely answered by the troops sent down from Fort Washington, and several Hessians were killed. An occasional firing was kept up until evening, when the ships fell down the river, and the troops which had advanced on Harlem Plains drew within their lines again.

"We take this day's movement to be only a feint," writes one of the garrison at Fort Lee; "at any rate, it is little honorable to the red-coats." Its chief effect was to startle the distant camp, and astound a quiet country with the thundering din of war.

The celebrated Thomas Paine, author of "The Rights of Man," and other political works, was a spectator of the affair from the rocky summit of the Palisades, on the Jersey shore.

While these things were passing at Fort Washington, Lee had struck his tents, and with the rear division, eight thousand strong, the baggage and artillery, and a train of wagons four miles long, laden with stores and ammunition, was lumbering along the rough country roads to join the main army. It was not until Monday morning, after being on the road all night, that he arrived at White Plains.

Washington's camp was situated on high ground, facing the east. The right wing stretched towards the south along a rocky hill, at the foot of which the Bronx, making an elbow, protected it in flank and rear. The left wing rested on a small, deep lake among the hills. The camp was strongly entrenched in front.

About a quarter of a mile to the right of the camp, and separated from the height on which it stood by the Bronx and a marshy interval, was a corresponding height called Chatterton's Hill. As this partly commanded the right flank, and as the intervening bend of the Bronx was easily passable, Washington had stationed on its summit a militia regiment.

The whole encampment was a temporary one, to be changed as soon as the military stores collected there could be removed; and now that General Lee was arrived, Washington rode out with him, and other general officers who were off duty, to reconnoiter a height which appeared more eligible. When arrived at it, Lee pointed to another on the north, still more commanding. "Yonder," said he, "is the ground we ought to occupy." "Let us go, then, and view it," replied Washington. They were gently riding in that direction, when a trooper came spurring up his panting horse. "The British are in the camp, sir!" cried he. "Then gentlemen," said Washington, "we have other business to attend to than reconnoitering." Putting spurs to his horse, he set off for the camp at full gallop, the others spurring after him.

Arrived at head-quarters, he was informed by Adjutant-general Reed, that the picket guards had all been driven in, and the enemy were advancing: but that the whole American army was posted in order of battle. "Gentlemen," said Washington, turning calmly to his companions, "you will return to your respective posts, and do the best you can."

Apprehensive that the enemy might attempt to get possession of Chatterton's Hill, he detached Colonel Haslet with his Delaware regiment, to reinforce the militia posted there. To

these he soon added General McDougall's brigade, composed of Smallwood's Marylanders, Ritzema's New Yorkers, and two other regiments. These were much reduced by sickness and absence. General McDougall had command of the whole force upon the hill, which did not exceed 1,600 men.

These dispositions were scarcely made, when the enemy appeared glistening on the high grounds beyond the village of White Plains. They advanced in two columns, the right commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, the left by the Hessian general, De Heister. There was also a troop of horse; so formidable in the inexperienced eyes of the Americans. "It was a brilliant but formidable sight," writes Heath in his memoirs. "The sun shone bright, their arms glittered; and perhaps troops never were shown to more advantage."

For a time they halted in a wheat field, behind a rising ground, and the general officers rode up in the centre to hold a consultation. Washington supposed they were preparing to attack him in front, and such indeed was their intention; but the commanding height of Chatterton's Hill had caught Sir William's eye, and he determined first to get possession of it.

Colonel Rahl was accordingly detached with a brigade of Hessians, to make a circuit southwardly, round a piece of wood, cross the Bronx about a quarter of a mile below, and ascend the south side of the hill; while General Leslie, with a large force, British and Hessian, should advance directly in front, throw a bridge across the stream, and charge up the hill.

A furious cannonade was now opened by the British from fifteen or twenty pieces of artillery, placed on high ground opposite the hill; under cover of which, the troops of General Leslie hastened to construct the bridge. In so doing, they were severely galled by two field-pieces, planted on a ledge of rock on Chatterton's Hill, and in charge of Alexander Hamilton, the youthful captain of artillery. Smallwood's Maryland battalion, also, kept up a sharp fire of small arms.

As soon as the bridge was finished, the British and Hessians under Leslie rushed over it, formed and charged up the hill to take Hamilton's two field-pieces. Three times the two field-pieces were discharged, ploughing the ascending columns from hill-top to river, while Smallwood's "blue and buff" Marylanders kept up their volleys of musketry.

In the meantime Rahl and his Hessian brigade forded the Bronx lower down, pushed up the south side of the hill, and endeavored to turn McDougall's right flank. The militia gave the general but little support. They had been dismayed at

the opening of the engagement by a shot from a British cannon, which wounded one of them in the thigh, and nearly put the whole to flight. It was with the utmost difficulty McDougall had rallied them, and posted them behind a stone wall. Here they did some service, until a troop of British calvary, having gained the crest of the hill, came on, brandishing their sabres. At their first charge the militia gave a random, scattering fire, then broke, and fled in complete confusion.

A brave stand was made on the summit of the hill by Haslet, Ritzema, and Smallwood, with their troops. Twice they repulsed horse and foot, British and Hessians, until, cramped for room and greatly outnumbered, they slowly and sullenly retreated down the north side of the hill, where there was a bridge across the Bronx. Smallwood remained upon the ground for some time after the retreat had begun, and received two flesh wounds, one in the hip, the other through the arm. At the bridge over the Bronx, the retreating troops were met by General Putnam, who was coming to their assistance with Beall's brigade. In the rear of this they marched back into the camp.

The loss on both sides, in this short but severe action, was nearly equal. That of the Americans was between three and four hundred men, killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. At first it was thought to be much more, many of the militia and a few of the regulars being counted as lost, who had scattered themselves among the hills, but afterwards returned to headquarters.

The British army now rested with their left wing on the hill they had just taken, and which they were busy intrenching. They were extending their right wing to the left of the American lines so that their two wings and centre formed nearly a semicircle. It was evidently their design to outflank the American camp, and get in the rear of it. The day, however, being far advanced, was suffered to pass without any further attack; but the morrow was looked forward to for a deadly conflict. Washington availed himself of this interval to have the sick and wounded, and as much of the stores as possible, removed from the camp. "The two armies," says General Heath in his memoirs, "lay looking at each other, within long cannon shot. In the night-time the British lighted up a vast number of fires, the weather growing pretty cold. These fires, some on the level ground, some at the foot of the hills, and at all distances to their brows, some of which were lofty, seemed to the eye to mix with the stars. The American side doubtless exhibited to them a similar appearance."

During this anxious night, Washington was assiduously occupied throwing back his right wing to stronger ground; doubling his intrenchments and constructing three redoubts, with a line in front, on the summit of his posts. These works were principally intended for defense against small arms, and were thrown up with a rapidity that to the enemy must have savored of magic. They were, in fact, made of the stalks of Indian corn or maize taken from a neighboring corn-field, and pulled up with the earth clinging in masses to the large roots. "The roots of the stalks," says Heath, "and earth on them placed in the face of the works, answered the purpose of sods and fascines. The tops being placed inwards, as the loose earth was thrown upon them, became as so many trees to the work, which was carried up with a despatch scarcely conceivable.

In the morning of the 29th, when Howe beheld how greatly Washington had improved his position and strengthened it, by what appeared to be solidly constructed works, he postponed his meditated assault, ordered up Lord Percy from Harlem with the fourth brigade and two battalions of the sixth, and proceeded to throw up lines and redoubts in front of the American camp, as if preparing to cannonade it. As the enemy were endeavoring to outflank him, especially on his right wing, Washington apprehended one of their objects might be to advance a part of their force and seize on Pine's Bridge over Croton River, which would cut off his communication with the upper country. General Beall, with three Maryland regiments, was sent off with all expedition to secure that pass. It was Washington's idea that, having possession of Croton River and the passes in the Highlands, his army would be safe from further pursuit, and have time to repose after its late excessive fatigue, and would be fresh and ready to harass the enemy should they think fit to winter up the country.

At present nothing could exceed the war-worn condition of the troops, unseasoned as they were to this kind of service. A scornful letter, written at this time by a British officer to his friend in London, gives a picture of the ragged plight to which they were reduced, in this rainy and inclement season. "The rebel army are in so wretched a condition as to clothing and accoutrements, that I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tattered demalions. There are few coats among them but what are out at the elbows, and in a whole regiment there is scarce a pair of breeches. Judge, then, how they must be pinched by a winter's campaign. We, who are warmly clothed and well equipped, already feel it severely; for it is even now much colder than I ever felt in England."

Alas for the poor half-naked, weather-beaten patriots, who had to cope with these well-fed, well-clad, well-appointed mercenaries ! A letter written at the very same date (October 31,) by General George Clinton, shows what, in their forlorn plight, they had to grapple with.

"We had reason," writes he, "to apprehend an attack last night, or by daylight this morning. Our lines were manned all night in consequence ; and a most horrid night it was to lay in cold trenches. Uncovered as we are, daily fatigue making redoubts, fleches, abatis. and retreating from them and the little temporary huts made for our comfort before they are all finished, I fear will ultimately destroy our army without fighting." *

"However," adds he, honestly, "I would not be understood to condemn measures. They may be right for aught I know. I do not understand much of the refined art of war ; it is said to consist in stratagem and deception." In a previous letter to the same friend, in a moment of hurry and alarm, he writes, "Pray let Mrs. Clinton know that I am well, and that she need not be uneasy about me. It would be too much honor to die in so good a cause."

Clinton, as we have before intimated, was an honest and ardent patriot, of resolute spirit, and plain, direct good sense ; but an inexperienced soldier. His main idea of warfare was straightforward fighting ; and he was greatly perplexed by the continual strategy which Washington's situation required. One of the aides-de-camp of the latter had a truer notion on the subject. "The campaign hitherto," said he, "has been a fair trial of generalship, in which I flatter myself we have had the advantage. If we, with our motley army, can keep Mr. Howe and his grand appointment at bay, I think we shall make no contemptible military figure." †

On the night of the 31st, Washington made another of those moves which perplexed the worthy Clinton. In the course of the night he shifted his whole position, set fire to the barns and out-houses containing forage and stores, which there was no time to remove, and leaving a strong rear-guard on the heights and in the neighboring woods, retired with his main army a distance of five miles, among the high, rocky hills about North-castle. Here he immediately set to work to intrench and fortify himself ; his policy at this time being, as he used to say, "to fight with the spade and mattock."

General Howe did not attempt to dislodge him from this fast-

* George Clinton to John McKesson, October 31. *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, ii. 1312.

† Tench Tilghman to William Duer, October 31.

ness. He at one time ordered an attack on the rear-guard, but a violent rain prevented it, and for two or three days he remained seemingly inactive. "All matters are as quiet as if the enemy were one hundred miles distant from us," writes one of Washington's aides on the 2d of November. During the night of the 4th, this quiet was interrupted. A mysterious sound was heard in the direction of the British camp, like the rumbling of wagons and artillery. At daybreak the meaning of it was discovered. The enemy were decamping. Long trains were observed defiling across the hilly country, along the roads leading to Dobb's Ferry on the Hudson. The movement continued for three successive days, until their whole force, British and Hessians, disappeared from White Plains.

The night after their departure a party of Americans, heated with liquor, set fire to the court-house and other edifices in the village, as if they had belonged to the enemy; an outrage which called forth a general order from Washington, expressive of his indignation, and threatening the perpetrators with signal punishment when detected. We notice this matter, because in British accounts, the burning of those buildings had been charged upon Washington himself; being, no doubt, confounded with the burning of the barns and out-houses ordered by him on shifting his encampment.

CHAPTER VII.

CONJECTURES AS TO THE INTENTIONS OF THE ENEMY.—CONSEQUENT PRECAUTIONS.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH GREENE RESPECTING FORT WASHINGTON.—DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARMY.—LEE LEFT IN COMMAND AT NORTH CASTLE.—INSTRUCTIONS TO HIM.—WASHINGTON AT PEEKSKILL.—VISITS TO THE POSTS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

VARIOUS were the speculations at head-quarters on the sudden movement of the enemy. Washington writes to General William Livingston (now governor of the Jerseys): "They have gone towards the North River and King's Bridge. Some suppose they are going into winter quarters, and will sit down in New York without doing more than investing Fort Washington. I cannot subscribe wholly to this opinion myself. That they will invest Fort Washington, is a matter of which there

can be no doubt ; and I think there is a strong probability that General Howe will detach a part of his force to make an incursion into the Jerseys, provided he is going to New York. He must attempt something on account of his reputation, for what has he done as yet, with his great army ? ”

In the same letter he expressed his determination, as soon as it should appear that the present manœuvre was a real retreat, and not a feint, to throw over a body of troops into the Jerseys to assist in checking Howe's progress. He, moreover, recommended to the governor to have the militia of that State put on the best possible footing, and a part of them held in readiness to take the place of the State levies, whose term of service would soon expire. He advised, also, that the inhabitants contiguous to the water, should be prepared to remove their stock, grain, effects, and carriages, on the earliest notice.

In a letter of the same date, he charged General Greene, should Howe invest Fort Washington with part of his force, to give the garrison all possible assistance.

On the following day (Nov. 8), his aide-de-camp, Colonel Tilghman, writes to General Greene from head-quarters : “ The enemy are at Dobb's Ferry with a great number of boats, ready to go into Jersey, or *proceed up the river.* ”

Greene doubted any intention of the enemy to cross the river ; it might only be a feint to mislead ; still, as a precaution, he had ordered troops up from the flying camp, and was posting them opposite Dobb's Ferry, and at other passes where a landing might be attempted ; the whole being under the command of General Mercer.

Affairs at Fort Washington soon settled the question of the enemy's intentions with regard to it. Lord Percy took his station with a body of troops before the lines to the south. Knyphausen advanced on the north. The Americans had previously abandoned Fort Independence, burnt its barracks, and removed the stores and cannon. Crossing King's Bridge, Knyphausen took a position between it and Fort Washington. The approach to the fort, on this side, was exceedingly steep and rocky ; as, indeed, were all its approaches excepting that on the south, where the country was more open, and the ascent gradual. The fort could not hold within its walls above one thousand men ; the rest of the troops were distributed about the lines and outworks. While the fort was thus menaced, the *chevaux-de-frise* had again proved inefficient. On the night of the 5th, a frigate and two transports, bound up to Dobbs Ferry, with supplies for Howe's army, had broken through ; though according to Greene's account, not without being considerably shattered by the batteries.

Informed of these facts, Washington wrote to Greene on the 8th: "If we cannot prevent vessels from passing up the river, and the enemy are possessed of all the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to hold a post from which the expected benefit cannot be had? I am, therefore, inclined to think that it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington; but, as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders as to evacuating Mount Washington as you may judge best, and so far revoking the orders given to Colonel Magaw; to defend it to the last."

Accounts had been received at head-quarters of a considerable movement on the preceding evening (Nov. 7th), among the enemy's boats at Dobb's Ferry, with the intention, it was said, of penetrating the Jerseys, and falling down upon Fort Lee. Washington, therefore, in the same letter directed Greene to have all the stores not necessary to the defense removed immediately, and to destroy all the stock, the hay and grain, in the neighborhood, which the owners refused to remove. "Experience has shown," adds he, "that a contrary conduct is not of the least advantage to the poor inhabitants, from whom all their effects of every kind are taken without distinction and without the least satisfaction."

Greene, in reply (Nov. 9th), adhered with tenacity to the policy of maintaining Fort Washington. "The enemy," said he, "must invest it with double the number of men required for its defense. They must keep troops at King's Bridge, to cut off all communication with the country, and in considerable force, for fear of an attack." He did not consider the fort in immediate danger. Colonel Magaw thought it would take the enemy until the end of December to carry it. In the meantime, the garrison could at any time be brought off, and even the stores removed, should matters grow desperate. If the enemy should not find it an object of importance, they would not trouble themselves about it; if they should, it would be a proof that they felt an injury from its being maintained. The giving it up would open for them a free communication with the country by the way of King's Bridge.* It is doubtful when or where Washington received this letter, as he left the camp at Northcastle at eleven o'clock of the following morning. There being still considerable uncertainty as to the intentions of the enemy, all his arrangements were made accordingly. All the troops belonging to the States west of the Hudson, were to be stationed in the Jerseys, under command of General

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 618.

Putnam. Lord Stirling had already been sent forward with the Maryland and Virginia troops to Peekskill, to cross the river at King's Ferry. Another division, composed of Connecticut and Massachusetts troops, under General Heath, was to coöperate with the brigade of New York militia under General George Clinton, in securing the Highland posts on both sides of the river.

The troops which would remain at Northcastle after the departure of Heath and his division, were to be commanded by Lee. Washington's letter of instructions to that general is characterized by his own modesty, and his deference for Lee's superior military experience. He suggests, rather than orders, yet his letter is sufficiently explicit. "A little time now," writes he, "must manifest the enemy's designs, and point out to you the measures proper to be pursued by that part of the army under your command. I shall give no directions, therefore, on this head, having the most entire confidence in your judgment and military exertions. One thing, however, I will suggest, namely, that the appearance of embarking troops for the Jerseys may be intended as a feint to weaken us, and render the post we now hold more vulnerable, or the enemy may find that troops are assembled with more expedition, and in greater numbers, than they expected, on the Jersey shore, to oppose them; and, as it is possible, from one or other of these motives, that they may yet pay the party under your command a visit, it will be unnecessary, I am persuaded, to recommend to you the propriety of putting this post, if you stay at it, into a proper posture of defense, and guarding against surprises. But I would recommend it to your consideration whether, under the suggestion above, your retiring to Croton Bridge, and some strong post still more easterly (covering the passes through the Highlands), may not be more advisable than to run the hazard of an attack with unequal numbers. At any rate, I think all your baggage and stores, except such as are necessary for immediate use, ought to be to the northward of Croton River. . . . You will consider the post at Croton's (or Pine's) Bridge as under your immediate care. . . . If the enemy should remove the whole, or the greater part of their force to the west side of Hudson's River, I have no doubt of your following with all possible despatch, leaving the militia and invalids to cover the frontiers of Connecticut in case of need."

We have been minute in stating these matters, from their bearing on subsequent operations.

On the 10th of November Washington left the camp at

Northcastle at 11 o'clock, and arrived at Peekskill at sunset; whither General Heath, with his division, had preceded him by a few hours. Lord Stirling was there, likewise, having effected the transportation of the Maryland and Virginia troops across the river, and landed them at the ferry south of Stony Point; though a better landing was subsequently found north of the point. His lordship had thrown out a scouting party in the advance, and a hundred men to take possession of a gap in the mountain, through which a road passed toward the Jerseys.

Washington was now at the entrance of the Highlands, that grand defile of the Hudson, the object of so much precaution and solicitude. On the following morning, accompanied by Generals Heath, Stirling, James and George Clinton, Mifflin, and others, he made a military visit in boats to the Highland posts. Fort Montgomery was in a considerable state of forwardness, and a work in the vicinity was projected to coöperate with it. Fort Constitution commanded a sudden bend of the river, but Lord Stirling in his report of inspection had intimated that the fort itself was commanded by West Point opposite. A glance of the eye, without going on shore, was sufficient to convince Washington of the fact. A fortress subsequently erected on that point, has been considered the Key of the Highlands.

On the morning of the 12th, at an early hour, Washington rode out with General Heath to reconnoiter the east side of the Hudson, at the gorge of the Highlands. Henry Wisnor, in a report to the New York Convention, had mentioned a hill to the north of Peekskill, so situated, with the road winding along the side of it, that ten men on the top, by rolling down stones, might prevent ten thousand from passing. "I believe," said he, "nothing more need be done than to keep great quantities of stones at the different places where the troops must pass, if they attempt penetrating the mountains."

Near Robinson's Bridge, in this vicinity, about two miles from Peekskill, Washington chose a place where troops should be stationed to cover the south entrance into the mountains; and here, afterwards, was established an important military depot called Continental Village.

On the same day (12th), he wrote to General Lee, inclosing a copy of resolutions just received from Congress, respecting levies for the new army, showing the importance of immediately beginning the recruiting service. If no commissioners arrived from Rhode Island, he was to appoint the officers recommended

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i p. 212.

† *Ibid.*, i. 211.

to that State by General Greene. "I cannot conclude," adds he, "without reminding you of the military and other stores about your encampment, and at Northcastle, and to press the removal of them above Croton Bridge, or such other places of security as you may think proper. General Howe, having sent no part of his force to Jersey yet, makes the measure more necessary, as he may turn his views another way, and attempt their destruction."

It was evidently Washington's desire that Lee should post himself, as soon as possible, beyond the Croton, where he would be safe from surprise, and at hand to throw his troops promptly across the Hudson should the Jerseys be invaded.

Having made all these surveys and arrangements, Washington placed Heath in the general command of the Highlands, with written instructions to fortify the passes with all possible despatch, and directions how the troops were to be distributed on both sides of the river; and here we take occasion to give some personal notice of this trusty officer.

Heath was not win the fortieth year of his age. Like many of the noted officers of the Revolution, he had been brought up in rural life, on an hereditary farm near Boston; yet, according to his own account, though passionately fond of agricultural pursuits, he had also, almost from childhood, a great relish for military affairs, and had studied every treatise on the subject in the English language, so that he considered himself "fully acquainted with the *theory* of war, in all its branches and duties, from the private soldier to the commander-in-chief."

He describes himself to be of a middling stature, light complexion, very corpulent and bald-headed, so that the French officers who served in America, compared him, in person, to the Marquis of Granby.*

Such was the officer intrusted with the command of the Highland passes, and encamped at Peekskill, their portal. We shall find him faithful to his trust; scrupulous in obeying the letter of his instructions; but sturdy and punctilious in resisting any undue assumption of authority.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFFAIRS ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.—GATES AT TICONDEROGA.—ARNOLD'S FLOTILLA—MILITARY PREPARATIONS OF SIR GUY CARLETON AT ST. JOHN'S.—NAUTICAL ENCOUNTERS.—GALLANT CONDUCT OF ARNOLD AND WATERBURY.—CARLETON IN POSSESSION OF CROWN POINT.—HIS RETURN TO CANADA AND WINTER QUARTERS.

DURING his brief and busy sojourn at Peekskill, Washington received important intelligence from the northern army; especially that part of it on Lake Champlain, under the command of General Gates. A slight retrospect of affairs in that quarter is proper, before we proceed to narrate the eventful campaign in the Jerseys.

The preparations for the defense of Ticonderoga, and the nautical service on the lake, had met with difficulties at every step. At length, by the middle of August, a small flotilla was completed, composed of a sloop and a schooner each of twelve guns (six and four pounders), two schooners mounting eight guns each, and five gondolas, each of three guns. The flotilla was subsequently augmented, and the command given by Gates to Arnold in compliance with the advice of Washington; who had a high opinion of that officer's energy, intrepidity, and fertility in expedients.

Sir Guy Carleton, in the meantime, was straining every nerve for the approaching conflict. The successes of the British forces on the sea-board had excited the zealous rivalry of the forces in Canada. The commanders, newly arrived, were fearful the war might be brought to a close, before they could have an opportunity to share in the glory. Hence the ardor with which they encountered and vanquished obstacles which might otherwise have appeared insuperable. Vessels were brought from England in pieces and put together at St. John's, boats of various kinds and sizes were transported over land, or dragged up the rapids of the Sorel. The soldiers shared with the seamen in the toil. The Canadian farmers, also, were taken from their agricultural pursuits, and compelled to aid in these, to them, unprofitable labors. Sir Guy was full of hope and ardor. Should he get the command of Lakes Champlain and George, the northern part of New York would be at his mercy; before

winter set in he might gain possession of Albany. He would then be able to coöperate with General Howe in severing and subduing the northern and southern provinces, and bringing the war to a speedy and triumphant close.

In despite of every exertion, three months elapsed before his armament was completed. Winter was fast approaching. Before it arrived, the success of his brilliant plan required that he should fight his way across Lake Champlain; carry the strong posts of Crown Point and Ticonderoga; traverse Lake George, and pursue a long and dangerous march through a wild and rugged country, beset with forests and morasses, to Albany. That was the first post to the southward where he expected to find rest and winter quarters for his troops.*

By the month of October, between twenty and thirty sail were afloat, and ready for action. The flag-ship (the *Inflexible*) mounted eighteen twelve-pounders; the rest were gunboats, a gondola and a flat-bottomed vessel called a radeau, and named the *Thunderer*; carrying a battery of six twenty-four and twelve six-pounders, besides howitzers. The gunboats mounted brass field-pieces and howitzers. Seven hundred seamen navigated the fleet; two hundred of them were volunteers from the transports. The guns were worked by detachments from the corps of artillery. In a word, according to British accounts, "no equipment of the kind was ever better appointed or more amply furnished with every kind of provision necessary for the intended service." †

Captain Pringle conducted the armament, but Sir Guy Carleton was too full of zeal, and too anxious for the event, not to head the enterprise; he accordingly took his station on the deck of the flag-ship. They made sail early in October, in quest of the American squadron, which was said to be abroad upon the lake. Arnold, however, being ignorant of the strength of the enemy, and unwilling to encounter a superior force in the open lake, had taken his post under cover of Valcour Island, in the upper part of a deep channel, or strait between that island and the mainland. His force consisted of three schooners, two sloops three galleys and eight gondolas; carrying in all seventy guns, many of them eighteen pounders.

The British ships, sweeping past Cumberland Head with a fair wind and flowing sail on the morning of the 11th, had left the southern end of Valcour Island astern, when they discovered Arnold's flotilla anchored behind it, in a line extending across the strait so as not to be outflanked. They immediately hauled close to the wind, and tried to beat up into the channel. The wind, however, did not permit the largest of them to enter.

Arnold took advantage of the circumstance. He was on board of the galley *Congress*, and, leaving the line, advanced, with two other galleys and the schooner *Royal Savage*, to attack the smaller vessels as they entered before the large ones could come up. About twelve o'clock the enemy's schooner *Carleton* opened a brisk fire upon the *Royal Savage* and the galleys. It was as briskly returned. Seeing the enemy's gunboats approaching, the Americans endeavored to return to the line. In so doing, the *Royal Savage* ran aground. Her crew set her on fire and abandoned her. In about an hour the British brought all their gunboats in a range across the lower part of the channel within musket shot of the Americans, the schooner *Carleton* in the advance. They landed, also, a large number of Indians on the island, to keep up a galling fire from the shore upon the Americans, with their rifles. The action now became general, and was severe and sanguinary. The American finding themselves thus hemmed in by a superior force, fought with desperation. Arnold pressed with his galley into the hottest of the fight. The *Congress* was hulled several times, received seven shots between wind and water, was shattered in mast and rigging, and many of the crew were killed or wounded. The ardor of Arnold increased with his danger. He cheered on his men by voice and example, often pointing the guns with his own hands. He was ably seconded by Brigadier-general Waterbury, in the *Washington* galley, which, like his own vessel, was terribly cut up. The contest lasted throughout the day. Carried on as it was within a narrow compass, and on a tranquil lake, almost every shot took effect. The fire of the Indians from the shore was less deadly than had been expected; but their whoops and yells, mingling with the rattling of the musketry, and the thundering of the cannon, increased the horrors of the scene. Volumes of smoke rose above the woody shores, which echoed with the unusual din of war, and for a time this lovely recess of a beautiful and peaceful lake was rendered a perfect pandemonium.

The evening drew nigh, yet the contest was undecided. Captain Pringle, after a consultation with Sir Guy Carleton, called off the smaller vessels which had been engaged, and anchored his whole squadron in a line as near as possible to the Americans, so as to prevent their escape; trusting to capture the whole of them when the wind should prove favorable, so that he could bring his large vessels into action.

Arnold, however, sensible that with his inferior and crippled force all resistance would be unavailing, took advantage of a dark and cloudy night, and a strong north wind; his vessels

slipped silently through the enemy's line without being discovered, one following a light on the stern of the other: and by daylight they were out of sight. They had to anchor, however, at Schuyler's Island, about ten miles up the lake, to stop leaks and make repairs. Two of the gondolas were here sunk, being past remedy. About noon the retreat was resumed, but the wind had become adverse; and they made little progress. Arnold's galley, the *Congress*, the *Washington* galley and four gondolas, all of which had suffered severely in the late fight, fell astern of the rest of the squadron in the course of the night. In the morning, when the sun lifted a fog which had covered the lake, they beheld the enemy within a few miles of them in full chase, while their own comrades were nearly out of sight, making the best of their way for Crown Point.

It was now an anxious trial of speed and seamanship. Arnold with the crippled relics of his squadron, managed by noon to get within a few leagues of Crown Point, when they were overtaken by the *Inflexible*, the *Carleton*, and the schooner *Maria* of 14 guns. As soon as they came up, they poured in a tremendous fire. The *Washington* galley, already shattered, and having lost most of her officers, was compelled to strike, and General Waterbury and the crew were taken prisoners. Arnold had now to bear the brunt of the action. For a long time he was engaged within musket shot with the *Inflexible*, and the two schooners, until his galley was reduced to a wreck and one third of the crew were killed. The gondolas were nearly in the same desperate condition; yet the men stood stoutly to their guns. Seeing resistance vain, Arnold determined that neither vessels nor crew should fall into the hands of the enemy. He ordered the gondolas to run on shore, in a small creek in the neighborhood, the men to set fire to them as soon as they grounded, to wade on shore with their muskets, and keep off the enemy until they were consumed. He did the same with his own galley; remaining on board of her until she was in flames, lest the enemy should get possession and strike his flag, which was kept flying to the last.

He now set off with his gallant crew, many of whom were wounded, by a road through the woods to Crown Point, where he arrived at night, narrowly escaping an Indian ambush. Two schooners, two galleys, one sloop, and one gondola, the remnant which had escaped of the squadron, were at anchor at the Point, and General Waterbury and most of his men arrived there the next day on parole. Seeing that the place must soon fall into the hands of the enemy, they set fire to the houses,

destroyed everything they could not carry away, and embarking in the vessels made sail for Ticonderoga.

The loss of the Americans in these two actions is said to have been between eighty and ninety men ; that of the British about forty. It is worthy of mention, that among the young officers in Sir Guy Carleton's squadron, was Edward Pellew, who afterwards rose to renown as Admiral Viscount Exmouth ; celebrated, among other things for his victory at Algiers.

The conduct of Arnold in these naval affairs gained him new laurels. He was extolled for the judgment with which he chose his position, and brought his vessels into action ; for his masterly retreat, and for the self-sacrificing devotion with which he exposed himself to the overwhelming force of the enemy in covering the retreat of part of his flotilla.

Sir Guy Carleton took possession of the ruined works at Crown Point, where he was soon joined by the army. He made several movements by land and water, as if meditating an attack upon Ticonderoga ; pushing strong detachments on both sides of the lake, which approached within a small distance of the fort, while one vessel appeared within cannon shot of a lower battery, sounding the depth of the channel, until a few shot obliged her to retire. General Gates, in the meantime, strengthened his works with incessant assiduity, and made every preparation for an obstinate defense. A strong easterly wind prevented the enemy's ships from advancing to attack the lines, and gave time for the arrival of reinforcements of militia to the garrison. It also afforded time for Sir Guy Carleton to cool in ardor, and calculate the chances and the value of success. The post, from its strength, and the apparent number and resolution of the garrison, could not be taken without great loss of life. If taken, the season was now too far advanced to think of passing Lake George, and exposing the army to the perils of a winter campaign in the inhospitable and impracticable wilds to the southward. Ticonderoga, too, could not be kept during the winter, so that the only result of the capture would be the reduction of the works and the taking of some cannon ; all which damage the Americans could remedy before the opening of the summer campaign. If, however, the defense should be obstinate, the British army even if successful, might sustain a loss sufficient to cripple its operations in the coming year.*

These and other prudential reasons induced Carleton to give up all attempt upon the fortress at present. wherefore, re-em

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i. p. 214.

barking his troops, he returned to St. John's, and cantoned them in Canada for the winter. It was not until about the 1st of November that a reconnoitering party, sent out from Ticonderoga by General Gates, brought him back intelligence that Crown Point was abandoned by the enemy, and not a hostile sail in sight. All apprehensions of an attack upon Ticonderoga during the present year were at an end, and many of the troops stationed there were already on their march toward Albany.

Such was the purport of the news from the north, received by Washington at Peekskill. It relieved him for the present from all anxiety respecting affairs on Lake Champlain, and gave him the prospect of reinforcements from that quarter.

CHAPTER IX.

WASHINGTON CROSSES THE HUDSON.—ARRIVES AT FORT LEE.—AFFAIRS AT FORT WASHINGTON.—QUESTION ABOUT ITS ABANDONMENT.—MOVEMENTS OF HOWE.—THE FORT SUMMONED TO SURRENDER.—REFUSAL OF COLONEL MAGAW.—THE FORT ATTACKED.—CAPTURE OF THE FORT AND GARRISON.—COMMENTS OF WASHINGTON ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS.

ON the morning of the 12th of November, Washington crossed the Hudson, to the ferry below Stony Point, with the residue of the troops destined for the Jerseys. Far below were to be descried the *Phoenix*, the *Roebuck*, and the *Tartar*, at anchor in the broad waters of Haverstraw Bay and the Tappan Sea, guarding the lower ferries. The army, thus shut out from the nearer passes, was slowly winding its way by a circuitous route through the gap in the mountains, which Lord Stirling had secured. Leaving the troops which had just landed, to pursue the same route to the Hackensack, Washington, accompanied by Colonel Reed, struck a direct course for Fort Lee, being anxious about affairs at Fort Washington. He arrived there on the following day, and found, to his disappointment, that General Greene had taken no measures for the evacuation of that fortress; but on the contrary, had reinforced it with a part of Colonel Durkee's regiment, and the regiment of Colonel Rawlings, so that its garrison now numbered upwards of two thousand men; a great part, however, were militia. Washington's orders for its evacuation had, in fact, been discretionary, leaving the execution of them to Greene's judgment, "as being

on the spot." The latter had differed in opinion as to the policy of such a measure; and Colonel Magaw, who had charge of the fortress, was likewise confident it might be maintained.

Colonel Reed was of opposite counsels; but then he was personally interested in the safety of the garrison. It was composed almost entirely of Pennsylvania troops under Magaw and Lambert Cadwalader; excepting a small detachment of Maryland riflemen commanded by Otho H. Williams. They were his friends and neighbors, the remnant of the brave men who had suffered so severely under Atlee and Smallwood.* The fort was now invested on all sides but one; and the troops under Howe which had been encamped at Dobb's Ferry, were said to be moving down toward it. Reed's solicitude was not shared by the garrison itself. Colonel Magaw, its brave commander, still thought it was in no immediate danger.

Washington was much perplexed. The main object of Howe was still a matter of doubt with him. He could not think that Sir William was moving his whole force upon that fortress, to invest which a part would be sufficient. He suspected an ulterior object, probably a Southern expedition, as he was told a large number of ships were taking in wood and water at New York. He resolved, therefore, to continue a few days in this neighborhood, during which he trusted the designs of the enemy would be more apparent; in the meantime he would distribute troops at Brunswick, Amboy, Elizabethtown, and Fort Lee, so as to be ready at these various points, to check any incursions into the Jerseys.

In a letter to the President of Congress he urged for an increase of ordnance and field-artillery. The rough, hilly country east of the Hudson, and the strongholds and fastnesses of which the Americans had possessed themselves, had prevented the enemy from profiting by the superiority of their artillery; but this would not be the case, should the scene of action change to an open campaign country like the Jerseys.

Washington was mistaken in his conjecture as to Sir William Howe's design. The capture of Fort Washington was, at present, his main object; and he was encamped on Fordham Heights, not far from King's Bridge, until preliminary steps should be taken. In the night of the 14th, thirty flat-bottomed boats stole quietly up the Hudson, passed the American forts undiscovered, and made their way through Spyt den Duivel Creek into Harlem River. The means were thus provided for

* W. B. Reed's *Life of Reed*, i. 252.

crossing that river and landing before unprotected parts of the American works.

On the 15th, General Howe sent in a summons to surrender, with a threat of extremities should he have to carry the place by assault. Magaw, in his reply, intimated a doubt that General Howe would execute a threat "so unworthy of himself and the British nation; but give me leave," added he, "to assure his Excellency, that, actuated by the most glorious cause that mankind ever fought in, I am determined to defend this post to the very last extremity."

Apprised by the colonel of his peril, General Greene sent over reinforcements, with an exhortation to him to persist in his defense; and despatched an express to Washington, who was at Hackensack, where the troops which had crossed from Peekskill were encamped. It was nightfall when Washington arrived at Fort Lee. Greene and Putnam were over at the besieged fortress. He threw himself into a boat, and had partly crossed the river, when he met those generals returning. They informed him of the garrison's having being reinforced, and assured him that it was in high spirits, and capable of making a good defense. It was with difficulty, however, they could prevail on him to return with them to the Jersey shore, for he was excessively excited.

Early the next morning (16th), Magaw made his dispositions for the expected attack. His forces, with the recent addition, amounted to nearly three thousand men. As the fort could not contain above a third of that number, most of them were stationed about the outworks.

Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, with eight hundred Pennsylvanians, was posted in the outer lines, about two miles and a half south of the fort, the side menaced by Lord Percy with sixteen hundred men. Colonel Rawlings, of Maryland, with a body of troops, many of them riflemen, was stationed by a three-gun battery, on a rocky, precipitous hill, north of the fort, and between it and Spyt den Duivel Creek. Colonel Baxter, of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with his regiment of militia, was posted east of the fort, on rough, woody heights, bordering the Harlem River, to watch the motions of the enemy, who had thrown up redoubts on high and commanding ground, on the opposite side of the river, apparently to cover the crossing and landing of troops.

Sir William Howe had planned four simultaneous attacks; one on the north by Knyphausen, who was encamped on the York side of King's Bridge, within cannon shot of Fort Washington, but separated from it by high and rough hills, covered

with almost impenetrable woods. He was to advance in two columns, formed by detachments made from the Hessians of his corps, the brigade of Rahl, and the regiment of Waldeckers. The second attack was to be by two battalions of light infantry, and two battalions of guards, under Brigadier-general Mathew, who was to cross Harlem River in flat-boats, under cover of the redoubts above mentioned, and to land on the right of the fort. This attack was to be supported by the first and second grenadiers, and a regiment of light infantry under command of Lord Cornwallis. The third attack, intended as a feint to distract the attention of the Americans, was to be by Colonel Sterling, with the forty-second regiment, who was to drop down the Harlem River in bateaux, to the left of the American lines, facing New York. The fourth attack was to be on the south, by Lord Percy, with the English and Hessian troops under his command, on the right flank of the American intrenchments.*

About noon, a heavy cannonade thundering along the rocky hills, and sharp volleys of musketry, proclaimed that the action was commenced. Knyphausen's division was pushing on from the north in two columns, as had been arranged. The right was led by Colonel Rahl, the left by himself. Rahl essayed to mount a steep, broken height called Cock Hill, which rises from Spyt den Duivel Creek, and was covered with woods. Knyphausen undertook a hill rising from the King's Bridge road, but soon found himself entangled in a woody defile, difficult to penetrate, and where his Hessians were exposed to the fire of the three-gun battery, and Rawlings' riflemen.

While this was going on at the north of the fort, General Mathew, with his light infantry and guards, crossed the Harlem River in the flat-boats, under cover of a heavy fire from the redoubts.

He made good his landing, after being severely handled by Baxter and his men, from behind rocks and trees, and the breast-works thrown up on the steep river bank. A short contest ensued. Baxter, while bravely encouraging his men, was killed by a British officer. His troops, overpowered by numbers, retreated to the fort. General Mathew now pushed on with his guards and light infantry to cut off Cadwalader. That officer had gallantly defended the lines against the attack of Lord Percy, until informed that Colonel Sterling was dropping down Harlem River in bateaux to flank the lines, and take him in the rear. He sent off a detachment to oppose his landing. They did it wrongfully. About ninety of Sterling's men were

* Sir William Howe to Lord George Germaine.

killed or wounded in their boats, but he persevered, landed, and forced his way up a steep height, which was well defended, gained the summit, forced a redoubt, and took nearly two hundred prisoners. Thus doubly assailed, Cadwalader was obliged to retreat to the fort. He was closely pursued by Percy with his English troops and Hessians, but turned repeatedly on his pursuers. Thus he fought his way to the fort, with the loss of several killed and more taken prisoners; but marking his track by the number of Hessians slain.

The defense on the north side of the fort was equally obstinate and unsuccessful. Rawlings with his Maryland riflemen and the aid of the three-gun battery, had for some time kept the left column of Hessians and Waldeckers under Knyphausen at bay. At length Colonel Rahl, with the right column of the division, having forced his way directly up the north side of the steep hill at Spyt den Duivel Creek, came upon Rawlings' men, whose rifles from frequent discharges had become foul and almost useless, drove them from their strong post, and followed them until within a hundred yards of the fort, where he was joined by Knyphausen, who had slowly made his way through dense forest and over felled trees. Here they took post behind a large stone house, and sent in a flag, with a second summons to surrender.

Washington, surrounded by several of his officers, had been an anxious spectator of the battle from the opposite side of the Hudson. Much of it was hidden from him by intervening hills and forest; but the roar of cannonry from the valley of Harlem River, the sharp and incessant reports of rifles, and the smoke rising above the tree tops, told him of the spirit with which the assault was received at various points, and gave him for a time a hope that the defense might be successful. The action about the lines to the south lay open to him, and could be distinctly seen though a telescope; and nothing encouraged him more than the gallant style in which Cadwalader with an inferior force maintained his position. When he saw him, however, assailed in flank, the line broken, and his troops, overpowered by numbers, retreating to the fort, he gave up the game as lost. The worst sight of all, was to behold his men cut down and bayoneted by the Hessians while begging quarter. It is said so completely to have overcome him, that he wept "with the tenderness of a child."

Seeing the flag go into the fort from Knyphausen's division, and surmising it to be a summons to surrender, he wrote a note to Magaw, telling him that if he could hold out until evening and the place could not be maintained, he would endeavor to

bring off the garrison in the night. Captain Gooch, of Boston, a brave and daring man, offered to be the bearer of the note. "He ran down to the river, jumped into a small boat, pushed over the river, landed under the bank, ran up to the fort and delivered the message; came out, ran and jumped over the broken ground, dodging the Hessians, some of whom struck at him with their pieces and others attempted to thrust him with their bayonets; escaping through them, he got to his boat and returned to Fort Lee." *

Washington's message arrived too late. "The fort was so crowded by the garrison, and the troops which had retreated into it, that it was difficult to move about. The enemy, too, were in possession of the little redoubts around, and could have poured in showers of shells and ricochet balls that would have made dreadful slaughter." It was no longer possible for Magaw to get his troops to man the lines; he was compelled, therefore, to yield himself and his garrison prisoners of war. The only terms granted them were, that the men should retain their baggage and the officers their swords.

The sight of the American flag hauled down, and the British flag waving in its place, told Washington of the surrender. His instant care was for the safety of the upper country, now that the lower defenses of the Hudson were at an end. Before he knew anything about the terms of capitulation, he wrote to General Lee, informing him of the surrender, and calling his attention to the passes of the Highlands and those which lay east of the river; begging him to have such measures adopted for their defense as his judgment should suggest to be necessary. "I do not mean," added he, "to advise abandoning your present post, contrary to your own opinion; but only to mention my own ideas, of the importance of those passes, and that you cannot give too much attention to their security, by having works erected on the most advantageous places for that purpose."

Lee, in reply, objected to removing from his actual encampment at Northcastle. "It would give us," said he, "the air of being frightened; it would expose a fine, fertile country to their ravages; and I must add, that we are as secure as we could be in any position whatever." After stating that he should deposit his stores, etc., in a place fully as safe, and more central than Peekskill, he adds: "As to ourselves, light as we are, several retreats present themselves. In short, if we keep a good look-out, we are in no danger; but I must entreat your Excellency to enjoin the officers posted at Fort Lee, to

* Heath's *Memoirs*, p. 86.

give us the quickest intelligence, if they observe any embarkation on the North River." As to the affair of Fort Washington, all that Lee observed on the subject was: "O, general, why would you be over-persuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own? It was a cursed affair."

Lee's allusion to men of inferior judgment, was principally aimed at Greene, whose influence with the commander-in-chief seems to have excited a jealousy of other officers of rank. So Colonel Tilghman, Washington's aide-de-camp, writes on the 17th, to Robert R. Livingston of New York, "We were in a fair way of finishing the campaign with credit to ourselves, and, I think, to the disgrace of Mr. Howe; and, had the general followed his own opinion, the garrison would have been withdrawn immediately upon the enemy's falling down from Dobb's Ferry. But General Greene was positive that our forces might at any time be drawn off under the guns of Fort Lee. Fatal experience has evinced the contrary." *

Washington's own comments on the reduction of the fort, made in a letter to his brother Augustine, are worthy of special note. "This is a most unfortunate affair, and has given me great mortification; as we have lost, not only two thousand men,† that were there, but a good deal of artillery, and some of the best arms we had. And what adds to my mortification is, that this post, after the last ships went past it, was held contrary to my wishes and opinion, as I conceived it to be a hazardous one: but it having been determined on by a full council of general officers, and a resolution of Congress having been received, strongly expressive of their desire that the channel of the river which we had been laboring to stop for a long time at that place, might be obstructed, if possible; and knowing that this could not be done, unless there were batteries to protect the obstructions, I did not care to give an absolute order for withdrawing the garrison, till I could get round and see the situation of things; and then it became too late, as the place was invested. Upon the passing of the last ships, I had given it as my opinion to General Greene, under whose care it was, that it would be best to evacuate the place; but, as the order was discretionary, and his opinion differed from mine, it was unhappily delayed too long, to my great grief."

The correspondence of Washington with his brother, is full of gloomy anticipations. "In ten days from this date, there

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 780.

† The number of prisoners, as returned by Sir William Howe, was 2,818, of whom 2,607 were privates. They were marched off to New York at midnight.

will not be above two thousand men, if that number, of the fixed established regiments on this side of Hudson River, to oppose Howe's whole army ; and very little more on the other, to secure the eastern colonies, and the important passes leading through the Highlands to Albany, and the country about the lakes. In short, it is impossible for me, in the compass of a letter, to give you any idea of our situation, of my difficulties, and of the constant perplexities I meet with, derived from the unhappy policy of short enlistments, and delaying them too long. Last fall, or winter, before the army, which was then to be raised, was set about, I represented in clear and explicit terms the evils which would arise from short enlistments, the expense which must attend the raising an army every year, and the futility of such an army when raised ; and if I had spoken with a prophetic spirit, I could not have foretold the evils with more accuracy than I did. All the year since, I have been pressing Congress to delay no time in engaging men upon such terms as would insure success, telling them that the longer it was delayed, the more difficult it would prove. But the measure was not commenced until it was too late to be effected. . . . I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde motion of things ; and I solemnly protest, that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds a year would not induce me to undergo what I do, and, after all, perhaps to lose my character ; as it is impossible, under such a variety of distressing circumstances, to conduct matters agreeably to public expectations."

CHAPTER X.

THE ENEMY CROSS THE HUDSON.—RETREAT OF THE GARRISON FROM FORT LEE.—THE CROSSING OF THE HACKENSACK.—LEE ORDERED TO MOVE TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE RIVER.—REED'S LETTER TO HIM.—SECOND MOVE OF THE ARMY BEYOND THE PASSAIC.—ASSISTANCE SOUGHT FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS.—CORRESPONDENCES AND SCHEMES OF LEE.—HEATH STANCH TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS.—ANXIETY OF GEORGE CLINTON FOR THE SAFETY OF THE HUDSON.—CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE ARMY.—DISPARAGING CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LEE AND REED.—WASHINGTON RETREATS ACROSS THE RARITAN.—ARRIVES AT TRENTON.—REMOVES HIS BAGGAGE ACROSS THE DELAWARE.—DISMAY AND DESPONDENCY OF THE COUNTRY.—PROCLAMATION OF LORD HOWE.—EXULTATION OF THE ENEMY.—WASHINGTON'S RESOLVE IN CASE OF EXTREMITY.

WITH the capture of Fort Washington, the project of obstructing the navigation of the Hudson, at that point, was at an end. Fort Lee, consequently, became useless, and Washington ordered all the ammunition and stores to be removed, preparatory to its abandonment. This was effected with the whole of the ammunition, and a part of the stores, and every exertion was making to hurry off the remainder, when early in the morning of the 20th, intelligence was brought that the enemy, with two hundred boats, had crossed the river and landed a few miles above. General Greene immediately ordered the garrison under arms, sent out troops to hold the enemy in check, and sent off an express to Washington at Hackensack.

The enemy had crossed the Hudson on a very rainy night, in two divisions, one diagonally upward from King's Bridge, landing on the west side, about eight o'clock; the other marched up the east bank, three or four miles, and then crossed to the opposite shore. The whole corps, six thousand strong, and under the command of Lord Cornwallis, were landed, with their cannon, by ten o'clock, at a place called Closter Dock, five or six miles above Fort Lee, and under that line of lofty and perpendicular cliffs known as the Palisades. "The seamen," says Sir William Howe, "distinguished themselves remarkably on this occasion, by their readiness to drag the cannon up a very nar-

row road, for nearly half a mile to the top of a precipice, which bounds the shore for some miles on the west side." *

Washington arrived at the fort in three-quarters of an hour. Being told that the enemy were extending themselves across the country, he at once saw that they intended to form a line from the Hudson to the Hackensack, and hem the whole garrison in between the two rivers. Nothing would save it but a prompt retreat to secure the bridge over the Hackensack. No time was to be lost. The troops sent out to check the enemy were recalled. The retreat commenced in all haste. There was a want of horses and wagons; a great quantity of baggage, stores, and provisions, therefore, was abandoned. So was all the artillery excepting two twelve-pounders. Even the tents were left standing, and camp-kettles on the fire. With all their speed they did not reach the Hackensack River before the vanguard of the enemy was close upon them. Expecting a brush, the greater part hurried over the bridge, others crossed at the ferry, and some higher up. The enemy, however, did not dispute the passage of the river; but Cornwallis stated in his despatches, that, had not the Americans been apprised of his approach, he would have surrounded them at the fort. Some of his troops that night occupied the tents they had abandoned.

From Hackensack, Colonel Grayson one of Washington's aides-de-camp, wrote instantly, by his orders, to General Lee; informing him that the enemy had crossed into the Jerseys, and as was reported, *in great numbers*. "His Excellency," adds Grayson, "thinks it would be advisable in you to remove the troops under your command on this side of the North River, and there wait for further commands."

Washington himself wrote to Lee on the following day (Nov. 21st). "I am of opinion," said he, "and the gentlemen about me concur in it, that the public interest requires your coming over to this side of the Hudson with the continental troops. . . The enemy is evidently changing the seat of war to this side of the North River, and the inhabitants of this country will expect the continental army to give them what support they can; and failing in that, they will cease to depend upon, or support a force from which no protection is to be derived. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that at least an appearance of force should be made, to keep this province in connection with the others."

* Some writers have stated that Cornwallis crossed on the 18th. They have been misled by a letter of Sir William Howe, which gives that date. Lord Howe, in a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, gives the date we have stated (the 20th), which is the true one,

In this moment of hurry and agitation, Colonel Reed, also, Washington's *fidus Achates*, wrote to Lee, but in a tone and spirit that may surprise the reader, knowing the devotion he had hitherto manifested for the commander-in-chief. After expressing the common wish that Lee should be at the principal scene of action, he adds: "I do not mean to flatter or praise you at the expense of any other; but I do think it is entirely owing to you, that this army, and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent on it, are not entirely cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanting in minds otherwise valuable, and I ascribe to this our escape from York Island, King's Bridge, and the Plains; and I have no doubt, had you been here, the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed a part of this army: and from all these circumstances, I confess, I do ardently wish to see you removed from a place where there will be so little call for your judgment and experience, to the place where they are likely to be so necessary. Nor am I singular in my opinion; every gentleman of the family, the officers and soldiers generally, have a confidence in you. The enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to be less confident when you are present."

Then alluding to the late affair at Fort Washington, he continues: "General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations from us, would, I believe, have saved the men, and their arms; but, unluckily, General Greene's judgment was contrary. This kept the general's mind in a state of suspense, till the stroke was struck. O general! An indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army; how often have I lamented it this campaign. All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful and alarming situation; one that requires the utmost wisdom and firmness of mind. As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress, and form the plan of the new army. . . . I must conclude, with my clear and explicit opinion, that your presence is of the last importance." *

Well might Washington apprehend that this character and conduct, in the perplexities in which he was placed, would be liable to be misunderstood by the public, when the friend of his bosom could so misjudge him.

Reed had evidently been dazzled by the daring spirit and unscrupulous policy of Lee, who, in carrying out his measures, heeded but little the counsels of others, or even the orders of government. Washington's respect for both, and the caution with which he hesitated in adopting measures in opposition to

them, was stamped by the bold soldier and his admirers as indecision.

At Hackensack the army did not exceed three thousand men, and they were dispirited by ill-success, and the loss of tents and baggage. They were without intrenching tools, in a flat country, where there were no natural fastnesses. Washington resolved, therefore, to avoid any attack from the enemy, though, by so doing, he must leave a fine and fertile region open to their ravages; or a plentiful storehouse, from which they would draw voluntary supplies. A second move was necessary, again to avoid the danger of being inclosed between two rivers. Leaving three regiments, therefore, to guard the passes of the Hackensack, and serve as covering parties, he again decamped, and threw himself on the west bank of the Passaic, in the neighborhood of Newark.

His army, small as it was, would soon be less. The term of enlistment of those under General Mercer, from the flying camp, was nearly expired; and it was not probable that, disheartened as they were by defeats and losses, exposed to inclement weather, and unaccustomed to military hardships, they would longer forego the comforts of their homes, to drag out the residue of a ruinous campaign.

In addition, too, to the superiority of the force that was following him, the rivers gave the enemy facilities, by means of their shipping, to throw troops in his rear. In this extremity he cast about in every direction for assistance. Colonel Reed, on whom he relied as on a second self, was despatched to Burlington, with a letter to Governor William Livingston, describing his hazardous situation, and entreating him to call out a portion of the New Jersey militia; and General Mifflin was sent to Philadelphia to implore immediate aid from Congress and the local authorities.

His main reliance for prompt assistance, however, was upon Lee. On the 24th came a letter from that general, addressed to Colonel Reed. Washington opened it, as he was accustomed to do, in the absence of that officer, with letters addressed to him on the business of the army. Lee was at his old encampment at Northcastle. He had no means, he said, of crossing at Dobb's Ferry, and the round by King's Ferry would be so great, that he could not get there in time to answer any purpose. "I have therefore," added he, "ordered General Heath, who is close to the only ferry which can be passed, to detach two thousand men to apprise his Excellency, and await his further orders; a mode which I flatter myself will answer better what I conceive to be the spirit of the orders, than should I

move the corps from hence. Withdrawing our troops from hence would be attended with some very serious consequences, which at present would be tedious to enumerate ; as to myself," adds he, "I hope to set out to-morrow."

A letter of the same date (Nov. 23d), from Lee to James Bowdoin, president of the Massachusetts council, may throw some light on his motives for delaying to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief. "Before the unfortunate affair at Fort Washington," writes he, "it was my opinion that the two armies—that on the east, and that on the west side of the North River—must rest each on its own bottom ; that the idea of detaching and reinforcing from one side to the other, on every motion of the enemy, was chimerical ; but to harbor such a thought in our present circumstances, is absolute insanity. In this invasion, should the enemy alter the present direction of their operations, and attempt to open the passage of the Highlands, or enter New England, I should never entertain the thought of being succored by the western army. I know it is impossible. We must, therefore, depend upon ourselves. To Connecticut and Massachusetts, I shall look for assistance. . . . I hope the cursed job of Fort Washington will occasion no dejection : the place itself was of no value. For my own part, I am persuaded that if we only act with common sense, spirit, and decision, the day must be our own."

In another letter to Bowdoin, dated on the following day, and inclosing an extract from Washington's letter of Nov. 21st, he writes : "Indecision bids fair for tumbling down the goodly fabric of American freedom, and, with it, the rights of mankind. 'Twas indecision of Congress prevented our having a noble army, and on an excellent footing. 'Twas indecision in our military councils which cost us the garrison of Fort Washington, the consequence of which must be fatal, unless remedied in time by a contrary spirit. Inclosed I send you an extract of a letter from the general, on which you will make your comments ; and I have no doubt you will concur with me in the necessity of raising immediately an army to save us from perdition. Affairs appear in so important a crisis, that I think the resolves of the Congress must no longer too nicely weigh with us. We must save the community, in spite of the ordinances of the legislature. There are times when we must commit treason against the laws of the State, for the salvation of the State. The present crisis demands this brave, virtuous kind of treason." He urges President Bowdoin, therefore, to waive all formalities, and not only complete the regiments prescribed to the province, but to add four companies to each regiment. "We must not

only have a force sufficient to cover your province, and all these fertile districts, from the insults and irruptions of the tyrant's troops, but sufficient to drive 'em out of all their quarters in the Jerseys, or all is lost. . . . In the meantime, send up a formidable body of militia, to supply the place of the continental troops, which I am ordered to convey over the river. Let your people be well supplied with blankets, and warm clothes, as I am determined, by the help of God, to unnest 'em, even in the dead of winter."*

It is evident Lee considered Washington's star to be on the decline, and his own in the ascendant. The "affair of Fort Washington," and the "indecision of the commander-in-chief," were apparently his watchwords.

On the following day (24th), he writes to Washington from Northcastle, on the subject of removing troops across the Hudson. "I have received your orders, and shall endeavor to put them in execution, but question whether I shall be able to carry with me any considerable number; not so much from a want of zeal in the men, as from their wretched condition with respect to shoes, stockings, and blankets, which the present bad weather renders more intolerable. I sent Heath orders to transport two thousand men across the river, apprise the general, and wait for further orders; but that great man (as I might have expected) intrenched himself within the letter of his instructions, and refused to part with a single file, though I undertook to replace them with a part of my own." He concludes by showing that, so far from hurrying to the support of his commander-in-chief, he was meditating a side blow of his own devising. "I should march this day with Glover's brigade; but have just received intelligence that Rogers' corps, a part of the light horse, and another brigade lie in so exposed a situation, as to present us the fairest opportunity of carrying them off. If we succeed, it will have a great effect, and amply compensate for two days' delay."

Scarce had Lee sent this letter, when he received one from Washington, informing him that he had mistaken his views in regard to the troops required to cross the Hudson; it was his (Lee's) division that he wanted to have over. The force under Heath must remain to guard the posts and passes through the Highlands, the importance of which was so infinitely great, that there should not be the least possible risk of losing them. In the same letter Washington, who presumed Lee was by this time at Peekskill advised him to take every precaution to come by a safe route, and by all means to keep between the enemy

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 811.

and the mountains, as he understood they were taking measures to intercept his march.

Lee's reply was still from Northcastle. He explained that his idea of detaching troops from Heath's division was merely for expedition's sake, intending to replace them from his own. The want of carriages and other causes had delayed him. From the force of the enemy remaining in Westchester County, he did not conceive the number of them in the Jerseys to be near so great as Washington was taught to believe. He had been making a sweep of the country to clear it of the tories. Part of his army had now moved on, and he would set out on the following day. He concluded with the assurance, "I shall take care to obey your Excellency's orders, in regard to my march, as exactly as possible."

On the same day, he vents his spleen in a tart letter to Heath. "I perceive," writes he, "that you have formed an idea, that should General Washington remove to the Straits of Magellan, the instructions he left with you, upon a particular occasion, have, to all intents and purposes, invested you with a command separate from, and independent of, any other superiors. . . . That General Heath is by no means to consider himself obliged to obey the second in command." He concluded by informing him that, as the commander-in-chief was now separated from them, he (Lee) commanded, of course, on this side of the water, and for the future would and must be obeyed.

Before receiving this letter, Heath, doubtful whether Washington might not be pressed, and desirous of having his troops across the Hudson, had sent off an express to him for explicit instructions on that point, and, in the meantime, had kept them ready for a move.

General George Clinton, who was with him, and had the safety of the Hudson at heart, was in an agony of solicitude. "We have been under marching orders these three days past," writes he, "and only wait the directions of General Washington. Should they be to move, all's over with the river this season, and, I fear, forever. General Lee, four or five days ago, had orders to move with his division across the river. Instead of so doing, he ordered General Heath to march his men through, and he would replace them with so many of his. General Heath could not do this consistent with his instructions, but put his men under marching orders to wait his Excellency's orders." Honest George Clinton was still perplexed and annoyed by these marchings and counter-marchings; and especially with these incessant retreats. "A strange way of cooking

business!" writes he. "We have no particular accounts yet from head-quarters, *but I am apt to believe retreating is yet fashionable.*"

The return of the express sent to Washington, relieved Clinton's anxiety about the Highlands; reiterating the original order, that the division under Heath should remain for the protection of the passes.

Washington was still at Newark when, on the 27th, he received Lee's letter of the 24th, speaking of his scheme of capturing Rogers the partisan. Under other circumstances it might have been a sufficient excuse for his delay, but higher interests were at stake; he immediately wrote to Lee as follows: "My former letters were so full and explicit, as to the necessity of your marching as early as possible, that it is unnecessary to add more on that head. I confess I expected you would have been sooner in motion. The force here, when joined by yours, will not be adequate to any great opposition; at present it is weak, and it has been more owing to the badness of the weather that the enemy's progress has been checked, than any resistance we could make. They are now pushing this way—part of 'em have passed the Passaic. Their plan is not entirely unfolded, but I shall not be surprised if Philadelphia should turn out the object of their movement."

The situation of the little army was daily becoming more perilous. In a council of war, several of the members urged a move to Morristown, to form a junction with the troops expected from the Northern army. Washington, however, still cherished the idea of making a stand at Brunswick on the Raritan, or, at all events, of disputing the passage of the Delaware; and in this intrepid resolution he was warmly seconded by Greene.

Breaking up his camp once more, therefore, he continued his retreat towards New Brunswick; but so close was Cornwallis upon him, that his advance entered one end of Newark, just as the American rear-guard had left the other.

From Brunswick, Washington wrote on the 29th to William Livingston, governor of the Jerseys, requesting him to have all boats and river craft, for seventy miles along the Delaware, removed to the western bank out of the reach of the enemy, and put under guard. He was disappointed in his hope of making a stand on the banks of the Raritan. All the force he could muster at Brunswick, including the New Jersey militia, did not exceed four thousand men. Colonel Reed had failed in procuring aid from the New Jersey legislature. That body, shifting from place to place, was on the eve of dissolution. The term of the Maryland and New Jersey troops in the flying camp had

expired. General Mercer endeavored to detain them, representing the disgrace of turning their back upon the cause when the enemy was at hand: his remonstrances were fruitless. As to the Pennsylvania levies, they deserted in such numbers, that guards were stationed on the roads and ferries to intercept them.

At this moment of care and perplexity, a letter, forwarded by express, arrived at head-quarters. It was from General Lee, dated from his camp at Northcastle, to Colonel Reed, and was in reply to the letter written by that officer from Hackensack on the 21st, which we have already laid before the reader. Supposing that it related to official business, Washington opened it, and read as follows:—

“MY DEAR REED,—I received your most obliging, flattering letter; lament with you that fatal indecision of mind, which in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or even want of personal courage. Accident may put a decisive blunderer in the right; but eternal defeat and miscarriage must attend the man of the best parts, if cursed with indecision. The general recommends in so pressing a manner as almost to amount to an order, to bring over the continental troops under my command, which recommendation, or order, throws me into the greatest dilemma from several considerations.” After stating these considerations, he adds: “My reason for not having marched already is, that we have just received intelligence that Rogers’ corps, the light horse, part of the Highlanders, and another brigade, lie in so exposed a situation as to give the fairest opportunity of being carried. I should have attempted it last night, but the rain was too violent, and when our pieces are wet, you know our troops are *hors de combat*. This night I hope will be better. . . . I only wait myself for this business of Rogers and company being over. I shall then fly to you; for, to confess a truth, I really think our chief will do better with me than without me.”

A glance over this letter sufficed to show Washington that, at this dark moment, when he most needed support and sympathy, his character and military conduct were the subject of disparaging comments, between the friend in whom he had so implicitly confided, and a sarcastic and apparently self-constituted rival. Whatever may have been his feelings of wounded pride and outraged friendship, he restrained them, and inclosed the letter to Reed, with the following chilling note:

“DEAR SIR,—The inclosed was put into my hands by an ex-

press from White Plains. Having no idea of its being a private letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it; as I have done all other letters to you from the same place, and Peekskill, upon the business of your office, as I conceived, and found them to be. This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse for seeing the contents of a letter, which neither inclination nor intention would have prompted me to," etc.

The very calmness and coldness of this note must have had a greater effect upon Reed, than could have been produced by the most vehement reproaches. In subsequent communications, he endeavored to explain away the offensive paragraphs in Lee's letter, declaring there was nothing in his own inconsistent with the respect and affection he had ever borne for Washington's person and character.

Fortunately for Reed, Washington never saw that letter. There were passages in it beyond the reach of softening explanation. As it was, the purport of it, as reflected in Lee's reply, had given him a sufficient shock. His magnanimous nature, however, was incapable of harboring long resentment; especially in matters relating solely to himself. His personal respect for Colonel Reed continued; he invariably manifested a high sense of his merits, and consulted him, as before, on military affairs; but his hitherto affectionate confidence in him, as a sympathizing friend, had received an incurable wound. His letters, before so frequent, and such perfect outpourings of heart and mind, became few and far between, and confined to matters of business.

It must have been consoling to Washington at this moment of bitterness, to receive the following letter (dated Nov. 27th) from William Livingston, the intelligent and patriotic governor of New Jersey. It showed that while many misjudged him, and friends seemed falling from his side, others appreciated him truly, and the ordeal he was undergoing.

"I can easily form some idea of the difficulties under which you labor," writes Livingston, "particularly of one for which the public can make no allowance, because your prudence and fidelity to the cause will not suffer you to reveal it to the public; an instance of magnanimity, superior, perhaps, to any that can be shown in battle. But depend upon it, my dear sir, the impartial world will do you ample justice before long. May God support you under the fatigue both of body and mind, to which you must be constantly exposed." *

* We cannot dismiss this painful incident in Washington's life, without a prospective note on the subject. Reed was really of too generous and intelligent a nature not be aware of the immense value of the friendship he had put at hazard. He grieved over his mistake especially

Washington lingered at Brunswick until the first of December, in the vain hope of being reinforced. The enemy, in the meantime, advanced through the country, impressing wagons and horses, and collecting cattle and sheep, as if for a distant march. At length their vanguard appeared on the opposite side of the Raritan. Washington immediately broke down the end of the bridge next the village, and after nightfall resumed his retreat. In the meantime, as the river was fordable, Captain Alexander Hamilton planted his field-pieces on high, commanding ground, and opened a spirited fire, to check any attempt of the enemy to cross.

At Princeton, Washington left twelve hundred men in two brigades, under Lord Stirling and General Adam Stephen, to cover the country, and watch the motions of the enemy. Stephen was the same officer that had served as a colonel under Washington in the French war, as second in command of the Virginia troops, and had charge of Fort Cumberland. In consideration of his courage and military capacity, he had, in 1764, been intrusted with the protection of the frontier. He had recently brought a detachment of Virginia troops to the army, and received from Congress, in September, the commission of brigadier-general.

The harassed army reached Trenton on the 2d of December. Washington immediately proceeded to remove his baggage and stores across the Delaware. In his letters from this place to the President of Congress, he gives his reasons for his continued retreat. "Nothing but necessity obliged me to retire before the enemy, and leave so much of the Jerseys unprotected. Sorry am I to observe that the frequent calls upon the militia of this State, the want of exertion in the principal gentlemen of the country, and a fatal supineness and insensibility of danger, till it is too late to prevent an evil that was not only foreseen, but foretold, have been the causes of our late disgraces.

"If the militia of this State had stepped forth in season (and timely notice they had), we might have prevented the enemy's crossing the Hackensack. We might, with equal possibility of success, have made a stand at Brunswick on the Raritan. But as both these rivers were fordable in a variety of places, being knee deep only, it required many men to guard the passes, and these we had not."

as after events showed more and more the majestic greatness of Washington's character. A letter in the following year, in which he sought to convince Washington of his sincere and devoted attachment, is really touching in its appeals. We are happy to add, that it appears to have been successful and to have restored in a great measure, their relations of friendly confidence.

In excuse for the people of New Jersey, it may be observed, that they inhabited an open, agricultural country, where the sound of war had never been heard. Many of them looked upon the Revolution as rebellion; others thought it a ruined enterprise; the armies engaged in it had been defeated and broken up. They beheld the commander-in-chief retreating through their country with a handful of men, weary, wayworn, dispirited; without tents, without clothing, many of them barefooted, exposed to wintry weather, and driven from post to post, by a well-clad, well-fed, triumphant force, tricked out in all the glittering bravery of war. Could it be wondered at, that peaceful husbandmen, seeing their quiet fields thus suddenly overrun by adverse hosts, and their very hearthstones threatened with outrage, should, instead of flying to arms, seek for the safety of their wives and little ones, and the protection of their humble means, from the desolation which too often marks the course even of friendly armies?

Lord Howe and his brother sought to profit by this dismay and despondency. A proclamation, dated 30th of November, commanded all persons in arms against His Majesty's government to disband and return home, and all Congresses to desist from treasonable acts: offering a free pardon to all who should comply within fifty days.

Many who had been prominent in the cause, hastened to take advantage of this proclamation. Those who had most property to lose, were the first to submit. The middle ranks remained generally steadfast in this time of trial.*

The following extract of a letter from a field-officer in New York, dated December 2d, to his friend in London, gives the British view of affairs. "The rebels continue flying before our army. Lord Cornwallis took the fort opposite Brunswick, plunged into Raritan River, and seized the town. Mr. Washington had orders from the Congress to rally and defend that post, but he sent them word he could not. He was seen retreating with two brigades to Trenton, where they talk of resisting; but such a panic has seized the rebels, that no part of the Jerseys will hold them, and I doubt whether Philadelphia itself will stop their career. The Congress have lost their authority. . . . They are in such consternation that they know not what to do. The two Adamses are in New England; Franklin gone to France; Lynch has lost his senses; Rutledge has gone home disgusted; Dana is persecuting at Albany, and Jay's in the country playing as bad a part; so that the fools have lost the assistance of the knaves. However, should they embrace the inclosed proclamation, they may yet escape the halter. . . .

* *Gordon's Hist. Am. War*, ii. p. 129.

Honest David Mathew, the mayor, has made his escape from them, and arrived here this day." *

In this dark day of peril to the cause and to himself, Washington remained firm and undaunted. In casting about for some stronghold where he might make a desperate stand for the liberties of his country, his thoughts reverted to the mountain regions of his early campaigns. General Mercer was at hand, who had shared his perils among these mountains, and his presence may have contributed to bring them to his mind. "What think you," said Washington; "if we should retreat to the back parts of Pennsylvania, would the Pennsylvanians support us?"

"If the lower counties give up, the back counties will do the same," was the discouraging reply.

"We must then retire to Augusta County in Virginia," said Washington. "Numbers will repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleghanies."

Such was the indomitable spirit, rising under difficulties, and buoyant in the darkest moment, that kept our tempest-tossed cause from foundering.

CHAPTER XI.

LEE AT PEEKSKILL.—STANCH ADHERENCE OF HEATH TO ORDERS.

—LEE CROSSES THE HUDSON.—WASHINGTON AT TRENTON.—

LEE AT THE HEELS OF THE ENEMY.—HIS SPECULATIONS ON MILITARY GREATNESS.—FORCED MARCH OF CORNWALLIS.—

WASHINGTON CROSSES THE DELAWARE.—PUTNAM IN COMMAND AT PHILADELPHIA.—BAFFLING LETTERS OF LEE.—

HOPES TO RECONQUER THE JERSEYS.—GATES ON THE MARCH.

—LEE QUARTERED AT BASKINGRIDGE.—SURPRISED AND CAPTURED.—SPECULATIONS ON HIS CONDUCT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the repeated and pressing orders and entreaties of the commander-in-chief, Lee did not reach Peekskill until the 30th of November. In a letter of that date to Washington, who had complained of his delay, he simply alleged difficulties, which he would explain *when both had leisure*. His scheme to entrap Rogers, the renegade, had failed; the old Indian hunter had been too much on the alert; he boasted, however, to have rendered more service by his delay, than he

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1037.

would have done had he moved sooner. His forces were thereby augmented, so that he expected to enter the Jerseys with four thousand firm and willing men, who would make *a very important diversion*.

"The day after to-morrow," added he, "we shall pass the river, when I should be glad to receive your instructions; but I could wish you would bind me as little as possible; not from any opinion, I do assure you, of my own parts, but from a persuasion that detached generals cannot have too great latitude, unless they are very incompetent indeed."

Lee had calculated upon meeting no further difficulty in obtaining men from Heath. He rode to that general's quarters in the evening, and was invited by him to alight and take tea. On entering the house, Lee took Heath aside, and alluding to his former refusal to supply troops as being inconsistent with the orders of the commander-in-chief. "In point of *law*," said he, "you are right, but in point of policy I think you are wrong. I am going into the Jerseys for the salvation of America; I wish to take with me a larger force than I now have, and request you to order two thousand of your men to march with me."

Heath answered that he could not spare that number. He was then asked to order one thousand; to which he replied, that the business might be as well brought to a point at once—that not a single man should march from the post by *his* order. "Then," exclaimed Lee, "I will order them myself." "That makes a wide difference," rejoined Heath. "You are my senior, but I have received positive written instructions from him who is superior to us both, and I will not *myself* break those orders. "In proof of his words, Heath produced the recent letter received from Washington, repeating his former orders that no troops should be removed from that post. Lee glanced over the letter. "The commander-in-chief is now at a distance, and does not know what is necessary here so well as I do." He asked a sight of the return book of the division. It was brought by Major Huntington, the deputy adjutant-general. Lee ran his eye over it, and chose two regiments. "You will order them to march early to-morrow morning to join me," said he to the major. Heath ruffling with the pride of military law, turned to the major with an air of authority. "Issue such orders at your peril!" exclaimed he: then addressing Lee, "Sir," said he, "if you come to this post, and mean to issue orders here which will break the positive ones I have received, I pray you to do it completely yourself, and through your own deputy adjutant-general who is present, and not draw me or any of my family in as partners in the guilt."

"It is right," said Lee; "Colonel Scammel, do you issue the order." It was done accordingly; but Heath's punctilious scruples were not yet satisfied. "I have one more request to make, sir," said he to Lee, "and that is, that you will be pleased to give me a certificate that you *exercise command* at this post, and order from it these regiments."

Lee hesitated to comply, but George Clinton, who was present, told him he could not refuse a request so reasonable. He accordingly wrote, "For the satisfaction of General Heath, and at his request, I do certify that I am commanding officer, at this present writing, in this post, and that I have, in that capacity, ordered Prescott's and Wyllis' regiments to march."

Heath's military punctilio was satisfied, and he smoothed his ruffled plumes. Early the next morning the regiments moved from their cantonments ready to embark, when Lee again rode up to his door. "Upon further considerations," said he, "I concluded not to take the two regiments with me—you may order them to return to their former post."

"This conduct of General Lee," adds Heath in his memoirs, "appeared not a little extraordinary, and one is almost at a loss to account for it. He had been a soldier from his youth, had a perfect knowledge of service in all its branches, but was rather obstinate in his temper, and could scarcely brook being crossed in anything in the line of his profession."*

It was not until the 4th of December that Lee crossed the Hudson and began a laggard march though aware of the imminent peril of Washington, and his army—how different from the celerity of his movements in his expedition to the South!

In the meantime, Washington, who was at Trenton, had profited by a delay of the enemy at Brunswick, and removed most of the stores and baggage of the army across the Delaware; and being reinforced by fifteen hundred of the Pennsylvania militia, procured by Mifflin, prepared to face about and march back to Princeton with such of his troops as were fit for service, there to be governed by circumstances, and the movement of General Lee. Accordingly, on the 5th of December he sent about twelve hundred men in the advance, to reinforce Lord Stirling, and the next day set off himself with the residue.

"The general has gone forward to Princeton," writes Colonel Reed, "where there are about three thousand men, with which, I fear, he will not be able to make any stand."*

While on the march, Washington received a letter from

* The above scene is given almost literally from General Heath's Memoirs.

† Reed to the President of Congress.

Greene, who was at Princeton, informing him of a report that Lee was "at the heels of the enemy." "I should think," adds Greene, "he had better keep on the flanks than the rear, unless it were possible to concert an attack at the same instant of time in front and rear. . . . I think General Lee must be confined within the lines of some general plan, or else his operations will be independent of yours. His own troops, General St. Clair's, and the militia, must form a respectable army."

Lee had no idea of conforming to a general plan; he had an independent plan of his own, and was at that moment at Pompton, indulging speculations on military greatness, and the lamentable want of it in his American contemporaries. In a letter from that place to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, he imparts his notions on the subject. "Theory joined to practice, or a heaven-born genius, can alone constitute a general. As to the latter, God Almighty indulges the world very rarely with the spectacle; and I do not know, from what I have seen, that he has been more profuse of this ethereal spirit to the Americans, than to other nations."

While Lee was thus loitering and speculating, Cornwallis, knowing how far he was in the rear, and how weak was the situation of Washington's army, and being himself strongly reinforced, made a forced march from Brunswick and was within two miles of Princeton. Stirling, to avoid being surrounded, immediately set out with two brigades for Trenton. Washington, too, receiving intelligence by express of these movements, hastened back to that place, and caused boats to be collected from all quarters, and the stores and troops transported across the Delaware. He himself crossed with the rear-guard on Sunday morning, and took up his quarters about a mile from the river; causing the boats to be destroyed, and troops to be posted opposite the fords. He was conscious, however, as he said, that with his small force he could make no great opposition, should the enemy bring boats with them. Fortunately, they did not come thus provided.

The rear-guard, says an American account, had barely crossed the river, when Lord Cornwallis "came marching down with all the pomp of war, in great expectation of getting boats, and immediately pursuing." Not one was to be had there or elsewhere; for Washington had caused the boats, for an extent of seventy miles up and down the river, to be secured on the right bank. His lordship was effectually brought to a stand. He made some moves with two columns, as if he would cross the Delaware above and below, either to push on to Philadelphia, or

to entrap Washington in the acute angle made by the bend of the river opposite Bordentown. An able disposition of American troops along the upper part of the river, and of a number of galleys below, discouraged any attempt of the kind. Cornwallis, therefore, gave up the pursuit, distributed the German troops in cantonments along the left bank of the river, and stationed his main force at Brunswick, trusting to be able before long to cross the Delaware on the ice.

On the 8th, Washington wrote to the President of Congress : "There is not a moment's time to be lost in assembling such a force as can be collected, as the object of the enemy cannot now be doubted in the smallest degree. Indeed I shall be out in my conjecture, for it is only conjecture, if the late embarkation at New York is not for Delaware River, to coöperate with the army under General Howe, who, I am informed from good authority, is with the British troops, and his whole force upon this route. I have no certain intelligence of General Lee, although I have sent expresses to him, and lately a Colonel Hump-ton, to bring me some accurate accounts of his situation. I last night despatched another gentleman to him (Major Hoops), desiring he would hasten his march to the Delaware, on which I would provide boats near a place called Alexandria, for the transportation of his troops. I cannot account for the slowness of his march."

In further letters to Lee, Washington urged the peril of Philadelphia. "Do come on," writes he ; "your arrival may be fortunate, and, if it can be effected without delay, it may be the means of preserving a city, whose loss must prove of the most fatal consequence to the cause of America."

Putnam was now detached to take command of Philadelphia, and put it in a state of defense, and General Mifflin to have charge of the munitions of war deposited there. By their advice Congress, hastily adjourned on the 12th of December, to meet again on the 20th, at Baltimore.

Washington's whole force at this time, was about five thousand five hundred men ; one thousand of them Jersey militia, fifteen hundred militia from Philadelphia, and a battalion of five hundred of the German yeomanry of Pennsylvania. Gates, however, he was informed, was coming on with seven regiments detached by Schuyler from the Northern department ; reinforced by these, and the troops under Lee, he hoped to be able to attempt a stroke upon the enemy's forces, which lay a good deal scattered, and, to all appearances, in a state of security. "A lucky blow in this quarter," writes he, "would be fatal to

them, and would most certainly raise the spirits of the people which are quite sunk by our late misfortunes." *

While cheering himself with these hopes, and trusting to speedy aid from Lee, that wayward commander, though nearly three weeks had elapsed since he had received Washington's orders and entreaties to join him with all possible despatch, was no further on his march than Morristown, in the Jerseys; where, with militia recruits, his force was about four thousand men. In a letter written by him on the 8th of December to a committee of Congress, he says: "If I was not taught to think the army with General Washington had been considerably reinforced, I should immediately join him; but as I am assured he is very strong, I should imagine we can make a better impression by beating up and harassing their detached parties in their rear, for which purpose a good post at Chatham seems the best calculated. It is a happy distance from Newark, Elizabethtown, Woodbridge, and Boundbrook. We shall, I expect, annoy, distract, and consequently weaken them in a desultory war." †

On the same day he writes from Chatham, in reply to Washington's letter by Major Hoops, just received: "I am extremely shocked to hear that your force is so inadequate to the necessity of your situation, as I had been taught to think you had been considerably reinforced. Your last letters proposing a plan of surprises and forced marches, convinced me that there was no danger of your being obliged to pass the Delaware; in consequence of which proposals, I have put myself in a position the most convenient to coöperate with you by attacking their rear. I cannot persuade myself that Philadelphia is their object at present. . . . It will be difficult, I am afraid, to join you; but cannot I do you more service by attacking their rear?"

This letter, sent by a light-horseman, received an instant reply from Washington. "Philadelphia, beyond all question, is the object of the enemy's movements, and nothing less than our utmost exertions will prevent General Howe from possessing it. The force I have is weak, and utterly incompetent to that end. I must, therefore, entreat you to push on with every possible succor you can bring." ‡

On the 9th, Lee, who was at Chatham, received information from Heath, that three of the regiments detached under Gates from the Northern army, had arrived from Albany at Peekskill. He instantly writes to him to forward them, without

* Washington to Gov. Trumbull, 14th Dec.

† *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1121.

‡ *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1138.

loss of time, to Morristown: "I am in hopes," adds he, "to reconquer (if I may so express myself) the Jerseys. It was really in the hands of the enemy before my arrival."

On the 11th, Lee writes to Washington from Morristown, where he says his troops had been obliged to halt two days for want of shoes. He now talked of crossing the great Brunswick post-road, and, by a forced night's march, making his way to the ferry above Burlington, where boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him.

"I am much surprised," writes Washington in reply, "that you should be in any doubt respecting the route you should take, after the information you have received upon that head. A large number of boats was procured, and is still retained at Tinicum, under a strong guard, to facilitate your passage across the Delaware. I have so frequently mentioned our situation, and the necessity of your aid, that it is painful for me to add a word on the subject. . . . Congress have directed Philadelphia to be defended to the last extremity. The fatal consequences that must attend its loss, are but too obvious to every one; your arrival may be the means of saving it."

In detailing the close of General Lee's march, so extraordinary for its tardiness, we shall avail ourselves of the memoir already cited, of General Wilkinson, who was at that time a brigade major, about twenty-two years of age, and was accompanying General Gates, who had been detached by Schuyler with seven regiments to reinforce Washington. Three of these regiments, as we have shown, had descended the Hudson to Peekskill, and were ordered, by Lee to Morristown. Gates had embarked with the remaining four, and landed with them at Esopus, whence he took a back route by the Delaware and the Minisink.

On the 11th of December, he was detained by a heavy snow storm, in a sequestered valley near the Wallpeck in New Jersey. Being cut off from all information respecting the adverse armies, he detached Major Wilkinson to seek Washington's camp, with a letter, stating the force under his command, and inquiring what route he should take. Wilkinson crossed the hills on horseback to Sussex court-house, took a guide, and proceeded down the country. Washington, he soon learnt, had passed the Delaware several days before; the boats, he was told, had been removed from the ferries, so that he would find some difficulty in getting over, but Major-general Lee was at Morristown. Finding such obstacles in his way to the commander-in-chief, he determined to seek the second in command, and ask orders from

him for General Gates. Lee had decamped from Morristown on the 12th of December, but had marched no further than Vealtown, barely eight miles distant. There he left General Sullivan with the troops, while he took up his quarters three miles off, at a tavern, at Baskingridge. As there was not a British cantonment within twenty miles, he took but a small guard for his protection, thinking himself perfectly secure.

About four o'clock in the morning, Wilkinson arrived at his quarters. He was presented to the general as he lay in bed, and delivered into his hands the letter of General Gates. Lee, observing it was addressed to Washington, declined opening it, until apprised by Wilkinson of its contents, and the motives of his visit. He then broke the seal, and recommended Wilkinson to take repose. The latter lay down on his blanket, before a comfortable fire, among the officers of his suite; "for we were not encumbered in those days," says he, "with beds or baggage."

Lee, naturally indolent, lingered in bed until eight o'clock. He then came down in his usual slovenly style, half-dressed, in slippers and blanket coat, his collar open, and his linen apparently of some days' wear. After some inquiries about the campaign in the North, he gave Wilkinson a brief account of the operations of the main army, which he condemned in strong terms, and in his usual sarcastic way. He wasted the morning in altercation with some of the militia, particularly the Connecticut light horse: "several of whom," says Wilkinson, "appeared in large full-bottomed perukes, and were treated very irreverently. One wanted forage, another his horse shod, another his pay, a fourth provisions, etc.; to which the general replied, 'Your wants are numerous: but you have not mentioned the last,—you want to go home, and shall be indulged; for d—you, you do no good here.'"

Colonel Scammel, the adjutant-general, called from General Sullivan for orders concerning the morning march. After musing a moment or two, Lee asked him if he had a manuscript map of the country. It was produced, and spread upon a table. Wilkinson observed Lee trace with his finger the route from Vealtown to Pluckamin, thence to Somerset court-house, and on, by Rocky Hill, to Princeton; he then returned to Pluckamin, and traced the route in the same manner by Boundbrook to Brunswick, and after a close inspection carelessly said to Scammel, "Tell General Sullivan to move down towards Pluckamin; that I will soon be with him."

This, observes Wilkinson, was off his route to Alexandria on the Delaware, where he had been ordered to cross, and directly

on that towards Brunswick and Princeton. He was convinced therefore, that Lee meditated an attack on the British post at the latter place.

From these various delays they did not sit down to breakfast before ten o'clock. After breakfast Lee sat writing a reply to General Gates, in which, as usual, he indulged in sarcastic comments on the commander-in-chief. "The ingenious manœuvre of Fort Washington," writes he, "has completely unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so d—d a stroke; *entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties; if I stay in this province I risk myself and army, and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. . . . As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the general, I would have you by all means go; you will at least save your army," etc.*

While Lee was writing, Wilkinson was looking out of a window down a lane, about a hundred yards in length, leading from the house to the main road. Suddenly a party of British dragoons turned a corner of the avenue at full charge. "Here, sir, are the British cavalry!" exclaimed Wilkinson.

"Where?" replied Lee, who had just signed his letter.

"Around the house!"—for they had opened file and surrounded it.

"Where is the guard? d—the guard, why don't they fire?" Then after a momentary pause—"Do, sir, see what has become of the guard."

The guards, alas, unwary as their general, and chilled by the air of a frosty morning, had stacked their arms, and repaired to the south side of a house on the opposite side of the road to sun themselves, and were now chased by the dragoons in different directions. In fact, a tory, who had visited the general the evening before, to complain of the loss of a horse taken by the army, having found where Lee was to lodge and breakfast, had ridden eighteen miles in the night, to Brunswick, and given the information, and had piloted back Colonel Harcourt with his dragoons.†

The women of the house would fain have concealed Lee in a bed, but he rejected the proposition with disdain. Wilkinson, according to his own account, posted himself in a place where only one person could approach at a time, and there took his stand, a pistol in each hand, resolved to shoot the first and

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1201.

† Joseph Trumbull to Governor Trumbull. *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1265.

second assailant, and then appeal to his sword. While in this "unpleasant situation," as he terms it, he heard a voice declare, "If the general does not surrender in five minutes, I will set fire to the house!" After a short pause the threat was repeated, with a solemn oath. Within two minutes he heard it proclaimed, "Here is the general, he has surrendered."

There was a shout of triumph, but a great hurry to make sure of the prize before the army should arrive to the rescue. A trumpet sounded the recall to the dragoons, who were chasing the scattered guards. The general, bareheaded, and in his slippers and blanket coat, was mounted on Wilkinson's horse, which stood at the door, and the troop clattered off with their prisoner to Brunswick. In three hours the booming of the cannon in that direction told the exultation of the enemy.* They boasted of having taken the American Palladium; for they considered Lee the most scientific and experienced of the rebels generals.

On the departure of the troops, Wilkinson, finding the coast clear, ventured from his stronghold, repaired to the stable, mounted the first horse he could find, and rode full speed in quest of General Sullivan, whom he found under march toward Pluckamin. He handed him the letter to Gates, written by Lee the moment before his capture, and still open. Sullivan having read it, returned it to Wilkinson, and advised him to rejoin General Gates without delay: for his own part, being now in command, he changed his route, and pressed forward to join the commander-in-chief.

The loss of Lee was a severe shock to the Americans; many of whom, as we have shown, looked to him as the man who was to rescue them from their critical and well-nigh desperate situation. With their regrets, however, were mingled painful doubts, caused by his delay in obeying the repeated summons of his commander-in-chief, when the latter was in peril; and by his exposing himself so unguardedly in the very neighborhood of the enemy. Some at the first suspected that he had done so designedly, and with collusion; but this was soon disapproved by the indignities attending his capture, and his rigorous treatment subsequently by the British; who affected to consider him a deserter, from his having formerly served in their army.

Wilkinson, who was at that time conversant with the cabals of the camp, and apparently in the confidence of some of the leaders, points out what he considers the true secret of Lee's conduct. His military reputation, originally very high, had been enhanced of late, by its being generally known that he had

* Joseph Trumbull to Governor Trumbull. *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1265.

been opposed to the occupation of Fort Washington ; while the fall of that fortress and other misfortunes of the campaign, though beyond the control of the commander-in-chief, had quickened the discontent which, according to Wilkinson, had been generated against him at Cambridge, and raised a party against him in Congress. "It was confidently asserted at the time," adds he, "but is not worthy of credit, that a motion had been made in that body tending to supersede him in the command of the army. In this temper of the times, if General Lee had anticipated General Washington in cutting the cordon of the enemy between New York and the Delaware, the commander-in-chief would probably have been superseded. In this case, Lee would have succeeded him."

What an unfortunate change would it have been for the country ! Lee was undoubtedly a man of brilliant talents, shrewd sagacity, and much knowledge and experience in the art of war ; but he was willful and uncertain in his temper, self-indulgent in his habits, and an egoist in warfare : boldly dashing for a soldier's glory rather than warily acting for a country's good. He wanted those great moral qualities which, in addition to military capacity, inspired such universal confidence in the wisdom, rectitude, and patriotism of Washington, enabling him to direct and control legislative bodies as well as armies ; to harmonize the jarring passions and jealousies of a wide and imperfect confederacy, and to cope with the varied exigencies of the Revolution.

The very retreat which Washington had just effected through the Jerseys bore evidence to his generalship. Thomas Paine, who had accompanied the army "from Fort Lee to the edge of Pennsylvania," thus speaks in one of his writings published at the time : "With a handful of men we sustained an orderly retreat for near an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field-pieces, the greatest part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can say that our retreat was precipitate, for we were three weeks in performing it, that the country might have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy, and remained out until dark. The sign of fear was not seen in our camp ; and had not some of the cowardly and disaffected inhabitants spread false alarms through the country, the Jerseys had never been ravaged."

And this is his testimony to the moral qualities of the commander-in-chief, as evinced in this time of perils and hardships. "Voltaire has remarked, that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action. The same remark may be made of General Washington, for the character fits

him. There is a natural firmness in some minds, which cannot be unlocked by trifles ; but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude ; and I reckon it among those kinds of public blessings which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care." *

CHAPTER XII.

WASHINGTON CLOTHED WITH ADDITIONAL POWERS.—RECRUITMENT OF THE ARMY.—INCREASED PAY.—COLONEL JOHN CADWALADER.—ARRIVAL OF SULLIVAN.—GATES.—WILKINSON. — A "COUP DE MAIN" MEDITATED. — POSTURE OF AFFAIRS AT TRENTON.—GATES DECLINES TO TAKE A PART.—HIS COMMENTS ON WASHINGTON'S PLANS.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE "COUP DE MAIN."—CROSSING OF THE DELAWARE.—ATTACK ON THE ENEMY'S FORCES AT TRENTON.—DEATH OF RAHL.—HIS CHARACTER.

BEFORE you receive this letter," writes Washington to his brother Augustine, "you will undoubtedly have heard of the captivity of General Lee. This is an additional misfortune ; and the more vexatious, as it was by his own folly and imprudence, and without a view to effect any good, that he was taken. As he went to lodge three miles out of his own camp, and within twenty miles of the enemy, a rascally tory rode in the night to give notice of it to the enemy, who sent a party of light horse that seized him, and carried him off with every mark of triumph and indignity."

This is the severest comment that the magnanimous spirit of Washington permitted him to make on the conduct and fortunes of the man who would have supplanted him ; and this is made in his private correspondence with his brother. No harsh strictures on them appear in his official letters to Congress or the Board of War ; nothing but regret for his capture, as a loss to the service.

In the same letter he speaks of the critical state of affairs : "If every nerve is not strained to recruit the army with all possible expedition, I think the game is pretty nearly up. . . . You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation. No man I believe ever had a greater choice of evils and less means to extricate himself from them. However, under a full

* *American Crisis*, No. 1.

persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for some time under a cloud."

Fortunately, Congress, prior to their adjournment, had resolved that "until they should otherwise order, General Washington should be possessed of all powers to order and direct all things relative to the department and to the operations of war." Thus empowered, he proceeded immediately to recruit three battalions of artillery. To those whose terms were expiring, he promised an augmentation of twenty-five per cent. upon their pay, and a bounty of ten dollars to the men for six weeks' service. "It was no time," he said, "to stand upon expense; nor in matters of self-evident exigency, to refer to Congress at the distance of a hundred and thirty or forty miles." "If any good officers will offer to raise men upon continental pay and establishment in this quarter, I shall encourage them to do so, and regiment them when they have done it. It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty, to adopt these measures, or to advise thus freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse." *

The promise of increased pay and bounties had kept together for a time the dissolving army. The local militia began to turn out freely. Colonel John Cadwalader, a gentleman of gallant spirit, and cultivated mind and manners, brought a large volunteer detachment, well equipped, and composed principally of Philadelphia troops. Washington, who held Cadwalader in high esteem, assigned him an important station at Bristol, with Colonel Reed, who was his intimate friend, as an associate. They had it in charge to keep a watchful eye upon Count Donop's Hessians, who were cantoned along the opposite shore from Bordentown to the Black Horse.

On the 20th of December arrived General Sullivan in camp, with the troops recently commanded by the unlucky Lee. They were in a miserable plight; destitute of almost everything; many of them fit only for the hospital, and those whose terms were nearly out, thinking of nothing but their discharge. About four hundred of them, who were Rhode Islanders, were sent down under Colonel Hitchcock to reinforce Cadwalader; who was not styled brigadier-general by courtesy, lest the continental troops might object to act under his command.

On the same day arrived General Gates, with the remnants of four regiments from the Northern army. With him came Wilkinson, who now resumed his station as brigade major in

* Letter to the President of Congress.

St. Clair's brigade, to which he belonged. To his memoirs we are indebted for notices of the commander-in-chief. "When the divisions of Sullivan and Gates joined General Washington," writes Wilkinson, "he found his numbers increased, yet his difficulties were not sensibly diminished; ten days would disband his corps and leave him 1,400 men, miserably provided in all things. I saw him in that gloomy period; dined with him, and attentively marked his aspect; always grave and thoughtful, he appeared at that time pensive and solemn in the extreme."

There were vivid schemes forming under that solemn aspect. The time seemed now propitious for the *coup de main* which Washington had of late been meditating. Everything showed careless confidence on the part of the enemy. Howe was in winter quarters at New York. His troops were loosely cantoned about the Jerseys, from the Delaware to Brunswick, so that they could not readily be brought to act in concert on a sudden alarm. The Hessians were in the advance, stationed along the Delaware, facing the American lines, which were along the west bank. Cornwallis, thinking his work accomplished, had obtained leave of absence, and was likewise at New York, preparing to embark for England. Washington had now between five and six thousand men fit for service; with these he meditated to cross the river at night, at different points, and make simultaneous attacks upon the Hessian advance posts.

He calculated upon the eager support of his troops, who were burning to revenge the outrages on their homes and families, committed by these foreign mercenaries. They considered the Hessians mere hirelings; slaves to a petty despot, fighting for sordid pay, and actuated by no sentiment of patriotism or honor. They had rendered themselves the horror of the Jerseys, by rapine, brutality, and heartlessness. At first, their military discipline had inspired awe, but of late they had become careless and unguarded, knowing the broken and dispirited state of the Americans, and considering them incapable of any offensive enterprise.

A brigade of three Hessian regiments, those of Rahl,* Lossberg, and Knyphausen, was stationed at Trenton. Colonel Rahl had the command of the post at his own solicitation, and in consequence of the laurels he had gained at White Plains and Fort Mifflin. We have before us journals of two Hessian

* Seldom has a name of so few letters been spelled so many ways as that of this commander. We find it written Rall in the military journals before us; yet we adhere to the one hitherto adopted by us, apparently on good authority,

lieutenants and a corporal, which give graphic particulars of the colonel and his post. According to their representation, he, with all his bravery, was little fitted for such an important command. He lacked the necessary vigilance and forecast.

One of the lieutenants speaks of him in a sarcastic vein, and evidently with some degree of prejudice. According to his account, there was more bustle than business at the post. The men were harassed with watches, detachments, and pickets, without purpose and without end. The cannon must be drawn forth every day from their proper places, and paraded about the town, seemingly only to make a stir and uproar.

The lieutenant was especially annoyed by the colonel's passion for music. Whether his men when off duty were well or ill clad, whether they kept their muskets clean and bright, and their ammunition in good order, was of little moment to the colonel, he never inquired about it; but the music! that was the thing! the haut-boys—he never could have enough of them. The main guard was at no great distance from his quarters, and the music could not linger there long enough. There was a church close by, surrounded by palings; the officer on guard must march round and round it, with his men and musicians, looking, says the lieutenant, like a Catholic procession, wanting only the cross and the banner, and chanting choristers.

According to the same authority, Rahl was a boon companion; made merry until a late hour in the night, and then lay in bed until nine o'clock in the morning. When the officers came to parade between ten and eleven o'clock, and presented themselves at head-quarters, he was often in his bath, and the guard must be kept waiting half an hour longer. On parade, too, when any other commander would take occasion to talk with his staff officers and others upon duty about the concerns of the garrison, the colonel attended to nothing but the music—he was wrapped up in it, to the great disgust of the testy lieutenant.

And then, according to the latter, he took no precautions against the possibility of being attacked. A veteran officer, Major von Dechow, proposed that some works should be thrown up, where the cannon might be placed, ready against any assault. "Works!—pooh—pooh:" the colonel made merry with the very idea—using an unseemly jest, which we forbear to quote. "An assault by the rebels! let them come! We'll at them with the bayonet."

The veteran Dechow gravely persisted in his counsel. "Herr Colonel," said he, respectfully, "it costs almost nothing; if it

does not help, it does not harm." The pragmatistical lieutenant, too, joined in the advice, and offered to undertake the work. The jovial colonel only repeated his joke, went away laughing at them both, and no works were thrown up.

The lieutenant, sorely nettled, observes, sneeringly: "He believed the name of Rahl more fearful and redoutable than all the works of Vauban and Cohorn, and that no rebel would dare to encounter it. A fit man truly to command a corps! and still more to defend a place lying so near an enemy having a hundred times his advantages. Everything with him was done heedlessly and without forecast." *

Such is the account given of this brave, but inconsiderate and light-hearted commander; given, however, by an officer not of his regiment. The honest corporal already mentioned, who was one of Rahl's own men, does him more justice. According to his journal, rumors that the Americans meditated an attack had aroused the vigilance of the colonel, and on the 21st of December he had reconnoitered the banks of the Delaware, with a strong detachment, quite to Frankfort, to see if there were any movements of the Americans indicative of an intention to cross the river. He had returned without seeing any; but had since caused pickets and alarm posts to be stationed every night outside the town.†

Such was the posture of affairs at Trenton at the time the *coup de main* was meditated.

Whatever was to be done, however, must be done quickly, before the river was frozen. An intercepted letter had convinced Washington of what he had before suspected, that Howe was only waiting for that event to resume active operations, cross the river on the ice, and push triumphantly to Philadelphia.

He communicated his project to Gates, and wished him to go to Bristol, take command there, and coöperate from that quarter. Gates, however, pleaded ill health, and requested leave to proceed to Philadelphia.‡

The request may have surprised Washington, considering the spirited enterprise that was on foot; but Gates, as has before been observed, had a disinclination to serve immediately under the commander-in-chief; like Lee, he had a disparaging opinion of him, or rather an impatience of his supremacy. He had, moreover, an ulterior object in view. Having been disappointed and chagrined, in finding himself subordinate to

* Tagebuch eines Hessischen Officers.—MS.

† Tagebuch des Corporals Johannes Reuber.—MS.

‡ Washington to Gates. Gate's papers.

General Schuyler in the Northern campaign, he was now intent on making interest among the members of Congress for an independent command. Washington urged that, on his way to Philadelphia, he would at least stop for a day or two at Bristol, to concert a plan of operations with Reed and Cadwalader, and adjust any little questions of etiquette and command that might arise between the continental colonels who had gone thither with Lee's troops and the volunteer officers stationed there.

He does not appear to have complied even with this request. According to Wilkinson's account, he took quarters at Newtown, and set out thence for Baltimore on the 24th of December, the very day before that of the intended *coup de main*. He prevailed on Wilkinson to accompany him as far as Philadelphia. On the road he appeared to be much depressed in spirits; but he relieved himself, like Lee, by criticising the plans of the commander-in-chief. "He frequently," writes Wilkinson, "expressed the opinion that, while Washington was watching the enemy above Trenton, they would construct bateaux, pass the Delaware in his rear, and take possession of Philadelphia before he was aware; and that, instead of vainly attempting to stop Sir William Howe at the Delaware, General Washington ought to retire to the south of the Susquehanna, and there form an army. *He said it was his intention to propose this measure to Congress at Baltimore*, and urged me to accompany him to that place; but my duty forbade the thought."

Here we have somewhat of a counterpart to Lee's project of eclipsing the commander-in-chief. Evidently the two military veterans who had once been in conclave with him at Mount Vernon considered the truncheon of command falling from his grasp.

The projected attack upon the Hessian posts was to be three-fold.

1st. Washington was to cross the Delaware with a considerable force, at McKonkey's Ferry (now Taylorsville), about nine miles above Trenton, and march down upon that place, where Rahl's cantonment comprised a brigade of fifteen hundred Hessians, a troop of British light horse, and a number of chasseurs.

2d. General Ewing, with a body of Pennsylvania militia, was to cross at a ferry about a mile below Trenton; secure the bridge over the Assunpink creek, a stream flowing along the south side of the town, and cut off any retreat of the enemy in that direction.

3d. General Putnam, with the troops occupied in fortifying Philadelphia, and those under General Cadwalader, was to cross

below Burlington, and attack the lower posts under Count Donop. The several divisions were to cross the Delaware at night, so as to be ready for simultaneous action, by five o'clock in the morning.

Seldom is a combined plan carried into full operation. Symptoms of an insurrection in Philadelphia, obliged Putnam to remain with some force in that city; but he detached five or six hundred of the Pennsylvania militia under Colonel Griffin, his adjutant-general, who threw himself into the Jerseys, to be at hand to coöperate with Cadwalader.

A letter from Washington to Colonel Reed, who was stationed with Cadwalader, shows the anxiety of his mind, and his consciousness of the peril of the enterprise.

"Christmas day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt upon Trenton. For Heaven's sake keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us; our numbers, I am sorry to say, being less than I had any conception of; yet nothing but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay must, justify an attack. Prepare, and in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can, with a prospect of success; the more we can attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread, and the greater good will result from it. . . . I have ordered our men to be provided with three days' provision ready cooked, with which, and their blankets, they are to march; for if we are successful, which Heaven grant, and the circumstances favor, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded, and not a soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with the permit. Do the same with you."

It has been said that Christmas night was fixed upon for the enterprise, because the Germans are prone to revel and carouse on that festival, and it was supposed a great part of the troops would be intoxicated, and in a state of disorder and confusion; but in truth Washington would have chosen an earlier day, had it been in his power. "We could not ripen matters for the attack before the time mentioned," said he in his letter to Reed, "so much out of sorts, and so much in want of everything are the troops under Sullivan."

Early on the eventful evening (Dec. 25th), the troops destined for Washington's part of the attack, about two thousand four hundred strong, with a train of twenty small pieces, were paraded near McKonkey's Ferry, ready to pass as soon as it grew dark, in the hope of being all on the other side by twelve o'clock. Washington repaired to the ground accompanied by Generals Greene, Sullivan, Mercer, Stephen, and Lord Stirling.

Greene was full of ardor for the enterprise; eager, no doubt to wipe out the recollection of Fort Washington. It was, indeed, an anxious moment for all.

We have here some circumstances furnished to us by the memoirs of Wilkinson. That officer had returned from Philadelphia, and brought a letter from Gates to Washington. There was some snow on the ground, and he had traced the march of the troops for the last few miles by the blood from the feet of those whose shoes were broken. Being directed to Washington's quarters, he found him, he says, alone, with his whip in his hand, prepared to mount his horse. When I presented the letter of General Gates to him, before receiving it, he exclaimed with solemnity,—‘What a time is this to hand me letters!’ I answered that I had been charged with it by General Gates. ‘By General Gates! Where is he?’ ‘I left him this morning in Philadelphia.’ ‘What was he doing there?’ ‘I understood him that he was on his way to Congress.’ He earnestly repeated, ‘On his way to Congress.’ then broke the seal, and I made my bow, and joined General St. Clair on the bank of the river.”

Did Washington surmise the incipient intrigues and cabals, that were already aiming to undermine him? Had Gates' eagerness to push on to Congress, instead of remaining with the army in a moment of daring enterprise, suggested any doubts as to his object? Perhaps not. Washington's nature was too noble to be suspicious, and yet he had received sufficient cause to be distrustful.

Boats being in readiness, the troops began to cross about sunset. The weather was intensely cold; the wind was high, the current strong, the river full of floating ice. Colonel Glover, with his amphibious regiment of Marblehead fishermen, was in advance; the same who had navigated the army across the Sound, in its retreat from Brooklyn on Long Island, to New York. They were men accustomed to battle with the elements, yet with all their skill and experience, the crossing was difficult and perilous. Washington, who had crossed with the troops, stood anxiously, yet patiently, on the eastern bank; while one precious hour after another elapsed, until the transportation of the artillery should be effected. The night was dark and tempestuous, the drifting ice drove the boats out of their course, and threatened them with destruction. Colonel Knox, who attended to the crossing of the artillery, assisted with his labors, but still more with his “stentorian lungs,” giving orders and directions.

It was three o'clock before the artillery was landed, and near-

ly four before the troops took up their line of march. Trenton was nine miles distant, and not to be reached before daylight. To surprise it, therefore, was out of the question. There was no making a retreat without being discovered, and harassed in repassing the river. Besides, the troops from the other points might have crossed, and coöperation was essential to their safety. Washington resolved to push forward, and trust to Providence.

He formed the troops into two columns. The first he led himself, accompanied by Greene, Stirling, Mercer, and Stephen; it was to make a circuit by the upper or Pennington road to the north of Trenton. The other, led by Sullivan, and including the brigade of St. Clair, was to take the lower river road, leading to the west end of the town. Sullivan's column was to halt a few moments at a cross-road leading to Howland's Ferry, to give Washington's column time to effect its circuit, so that the attack might be simultaneous. On arriving at Trenton, they were to force the outer guards, and push directly into the town before the enemy had time to form.

The Hessian journals before us enable us to give the reader a glance into the opposite camp on this eventful night. The situation of Washington was more critical than he was aware. Notwithstanding the secrecy with which his plans had been conducted, Colonel Rahl had received a warning from General Grant, at Princeton, of the intended attack, and of the very time it was to be made, but stating that it was to be by a detachment under Lord Stirling. Rahl was accordingly on the alert.

It so happened that about dusk of this very evening, when Washington must have been preparing to cross the Delaware, there were alarm guns and firing at the Trenton outpost. The whole garrison was instantly drawn out under arms, and Colonel Rahl hastened to the outpost. It was found in confusion, and six men wounded. A body of men had emerged from the woods, fired upon the picket, and immediately retired." Colonel Rahl, with two companies and a field-piece, marched through the woods, and made the rounds of the outposts, but seeing and hearing nothing, and finding all quiet, returned. Supposing this to be the attack against which he had been warned,

* Who it was that made this attack upon the outpost is not clearly ascertained. The Hessian lieutenant who commanded at the picket, says it was a patrol sent out by Washington, under command of a captain, to reconnoiter, with strict orders not to engage, but if discovered, to retire instantly as silently as possible. Colonel Reed, in a memorandum, says, it was an advance party returning from the Jerseys to Pennsylvania.—*See Life and Corresp.*, vol. i. p. 277.

and that it was "a mere flash in the pan," he relapsed into his feeling of security; and, as the night was cold and stormy, permitted the troops to return to their quarters and lay aside their arms. Thus the garrison and its unwary commander slept in fancied security, at the very time that Washington and his troops were making their toilsome way across the Delaware. How perilous would have been their situation had their enemy been more vigilant!

It began to hail and snow as the troops commenced their march, and increased in violence as they advanced, the storm driving the sleet in their faces. So bitter was the cold that two of the men were frozen to death that night. The day dawned by the time Sullivan halted at the crossroad. It was discovered that the storm had rendered many of the muskets wet and useless. "What is to be done?" inquired Sullivan of St. Clair. "You have nothing for it but to push on, and use the bayonet," was the reply. While some of the soldiers were endeavoring to clear their muskets, and squibbing off priming, Sullivan despatched an officer to apprise the commander-in-chief of the condition of their arms. He came back half dismayed by an indignant burst of Washington, who ordered him to return instantly and tell General Sullivan to "advance and charge."

It was about eight o'clock when Washington's column arrived in the vicinity of the village. The storm, which had rendered the march intolerable, had kept every one within doors, and the snow had deadened the tread of the troops and the rumbling of the artillery. As they approached the village, Washington, who was in front, came to a man that was chopping wood by the roadside, and inquired. "Which way is the Hessian picket?" "I don't know," was the surly reply. "You may tell," said Captain Forest of the artillery, "for that is General Washington." The aspect of the man changed in an instant. Raising his hands to heaven, "God bless and prosper you!" cried he. "The picket is in that house, and the sentry stands near that tree." *

The advance guard was led by a brave young officer, Captain William A. Washington, seconded by Lieutenant James Monroe (in after years President of the United States). They received orders to dislodge the picket. Here happened to be stationed the very lieutenant whose censures of the negligence of Colonel Rahl we have just quoted. By his own account, he was very near being entrapped in the guard-house. His sentries, he says, were not alert enough; and had he not stepped out of the

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 129.

picket house himself and discovered the enemy, they would have been upon him before his men could scramble to their arms. "Der feind! der feind! heraus! heraus!" (the enemy! the enemy! turn out! turn out!) was now the cry. He at first, he says, made a stand, thinking he had a mere marauding party to deal with; but seeing heavy battalions at hand, gave way, and fell back upon a company stationed to support the picket; but which appears to have been no better prepared against surprise.

By this time the American artillery was unlimbered; Washington kept beside it, and the column proceeded. The report of fire-arms told that Sullivan was at the lower end of the town. Colonel Stark led his advance guard, and did it in gallant style. The attacks, as concerted were simultaneous. The outposts were driven in; they retreated, firing from behind houses. The Hessian drums beat to arms; the trumpets of the light horse sounded the alarm; the whole place was in an uproar. Some of the enemy made a wild and undirected fire from the windows of their quarters; others rushed forth in disorder, and attempted to form on the main street, while dragoons hastily mounted, and galloping about, added to the confusion. Washington advanced with his column to the head of King Street, riding beside Captain Forest of the artillery. When Forest's battery of six guns was opened the general kept on the left and advanced with it, giving directions to the fire. His position was an exposed one, and he was repeatedly entreated to fall back; but all such entreaties were useless, when once he became heated in action.

The enemy were training a couple of cannon in the main street to form a battery, which might have given the Americans a serious check; but Captain Washington and Lieutenant Monroe, with a part of the advanced guard rushed forward, drove the artillerists from their guns, and took the two pieces when on the point of being fired. Both of these officers were wounded; the captain in the wrist, the lieutenant in the shoulder.

While Washington advanced on the north of the town, Sullivan approached on the west, and detached Stark to press on the lower or south end of the town. The British light horse, and about five hundred Hessians and chasseurs, had been quartered in the lower part of the town. Seeing Washington's column pressing in front, and hearing Stark thundering in their rear, they took headlong flight by the bridge across the Assunpink, and so along the banks of the Delaware towards Count Donop's encampment at Bordentown. Had Washington's plan been

carried into full effect, their retreat would have been cut off by General Ewing; but that officer had been prevented from crossing the river by the ice.

Colonel Rahl, according to the account of the lieutenant who had commanded the picket, completely lost his head in the confusion of the surprise. The latter, when driven in by the American advance, found the colonel on horseback, endeavoring to rally his panic-stricken and disordered men, but himself sorely bewildered. He asked the lieutenant what was the force of the assailants. The latter answered that he had seen four or five battalions in the woods, three of them had fired upon him before he had retreated—"but," added he, "there are other troops to the right and left, and the town will soon be surrounded." The colonel rode in front of his troops: "Forward! march! advance! advance!" cried he. With some difficulty he succeeded in extricating his troops from the town, and leading them into an adjacent orchard. Now was the time, writes the lieutenant, for him to have pushed for another place, there to make a stand. At this critical moment he might have done so with credit, and without loss. The colonel seems to have had such an intention. A rapid retreat by the Princeton road was apparently in his thoughts; but he lacked decision. The idea of flying before the rebels was intolerable. Some one, too exclaimed at the ruinous loss of leaving all their baggage to be plundered by the enemy. Changing his mind, he made a rash resolve. "All who are my grenadiers, forward!" cried he, and went back, writes his corporal, like a storm upon the town. "What madness was this!" writes the critical lieutenant. "A town that was of no use to us; that but ten or fifteen minutes before he had gladly left; that was now filled with three or four thousand enemies, stationed in houses or behind walls and hedges, and a battery of six cannon planted on the main street. And he to think of retaking it with his six or seven hundred men and their bayonets!"

Still he led his grenadiers bravely but rashly on, when, in the midst of his career, he received a fatal wound from a musket ball, and fell from his horse. His men, left without their chief, were struck with dismay; heedless of the orders of the second in command, they retreated by the right up the banks of the Assunpink, intending to escape to Princeton. Washington saw their design, and threw Colonel Hand's corps of Pennsylvania rifleman in their way; while a body of Virginia troops gained their left. Brought to a stand, and perfectly bewildered, Washington thought they were forming in order of battle, and ordered a discharge of canister shot. "Sir, they have struck," exclaimed

Forest. "Struck!" echoed the general. "Yes, sir, their colors are down." "So they are!" replied Washington, and spurred in that direction, followed by Forest and his whole command. The men grounded their arms and surrendered at discretion; "but had not Colonel Rahl been severely wounded," remarks his loyal corporal, "we would never have been taken alive!"

The skirmishing had now ceased in every direction. Major Wilkinson, who was with the lower column, was sent to the commander-in-chief for orders. He rode up, he says, at the moment that Colonel Rahl, supported by a file of sergeants, was presenting his sword. "On my approach," continues he, "the commander-in-chief took me by the hand and observed, 'Major Wilkinson, this is a glorious day for our country!' his countenance beaming with complacency; whilst the unfortunate Rahl, who the day before would not have changed fortunes with him, now pale, bleeding, and covered with blood, in broken accents seemed to implore those attentions which the victor was well disposed to bestow on him."

He was, in fact, conveyed with great care to his quarters, which were in the house of a kind and respectable Quaker family.

The number of prisoners taken in this affair was nearly one thousand, of which thirty-two were officers. The veteran Major von Dechow, who had urged in vain the throwing up of breast-works, received a mortal wound, of which he died in Trenton. Washington's triumph, however, was impaired by the failure of the two simultaneous attacks. General Ewing, who was to have crossed before day at Trenton Ferry, and taken possession of the bridge leading out of the town, over which the light horse and Hessians retreated, was prevented by the quantity of ice in the river. Cadwalader was hindered by the same obstacle. He got part of his troops over, but found it impossible to embark his cannon, and was obliged, therefore, to return to the Pennsylvania side of the river. Had he and Ewing crossed, Donop's quarters would have been beaten up, and the fugitives from Trenton intercepted.

By the failure of this part of his plan, Washington had been exposed to the most imminent hazard. The force with which he had crossed, twenty-four hundred men, raw troops, was not enough to cope with the veteran garrison, had it been properly on its guard; and then there were the troops under Donop at hand to coöperate with it. Nothing saved him but the utter panic of the enemy; their want of proper alarm places, and their exaggerated idea of his forces: for one of the journals before us (the corporal's) states that he had with him 15,000 men, and

another 6,000.* Even now that the place was in his possession he dared not linger in it. There was a superior force under Donop below him, and a strong battalion of infantry at Princeton. His own troops were exhausted by the operations of the night and morning in cold, rain, snow, and storm. They had to guard about a thousand prisoners, taken in action or found concealed in houses; there was little prospect of succor, owing to the season and the state of the river. Washington gave up, therefore, all idea of immediately pursuing the enemy or keeping possession of Trenton, and determined to recross the Delaware with his prisoners and captured artillery. Understanding that the brave but unfortunate Rahl was in a dying state, he paid him a visit before leaving Trenton, accompanied by General Greene. They found him at his quarters in the house of a Quaker family. Their visit and the respectful consideration and unaffected sympathy manifested by them, evidently soothed the feelings of the unfortunate soldier; now stripped of his late won laurels, and resigned to die rather than outlive his honor.†

We have given a somewhat sarcastic portrait of the colonel drawn by one of his lieutenants; another, Lieutenant Piel, paints with a soberer and more reliable pencil.

“For our whole ill luck,” writes he, “we have to thank Colonel Rahl. It never occurred to him that the rebels might attack us; and, therefore, he had taken scarce any precautions against such an event. In truth I must confess we have universally thought too little of the rebels, who, until now, have never on any occasion been able to withstand us. Our brigadier (Rahl) was too proud to retire a step before such an enemy; although nothing remained for us but to retreat.

“General Howe had judged this man from a wrong point of view, or he would hardly have intrusted such an important post as Trenton to him. He was formed for a soldier, but not for a general. At the capture of Fort Washington he had gained much honor while under the command of a great general, but he lost all his renown at Trenton where he himself was general. He had courage to dare the hardest enterprise; but he alone wanted the cool presence of mind necessary in a surprise like that at Trenton. His vivacity was too great; one thought crowded on another so that he could come to no decision. Con-

* The lieutenant gives the latter number on the authority of Lord Stirling; but his lordship meant the whole number intended for the three several attacks. The force that actually crossed with Washington was what we have stated.

† *Journal of Lieutenant Piel.*

sidered as a private man, he was deserving of high regard. He was generous, open-handed, hospitable; never cringing to his superiors, nor arrogant to his inferiors; but courteous to all. Even his domestics were treated more like friends than servants."

The loyal corporal, too, contributes his mite of praise to his dying commander. "In his last agony," writes the grateful soldier, "he yet thought of his grenadiers, and entreated General Washington that nothing might be taken from them but their arms. A promise was given," adds the corporal, "and was kept."

Even the satirical lieutenant half mourns over his memory. "He died," says he, "on the following evening, and lies buried in this place which he has rendered so famous, in the graveyard of the Presbyterian church. Sleep well! dear Commander! (theurer Feldherr). The Americans will hereafter set up a stone above thy grave with this inscription:—

"Hier liegt der Oberst Rahl,
Mit ihm ist alles all!"

(Here lies the Colonel Rahl,
With him all is over.)

CHAPTER XIII.

TREATMENT OF THE HESSIAN PRISONERS.—THEIR INTERVIEWS WITH WASHINGTON.—THEIR RECEPTION BY THE PEOPLE.

THE Hessian prisoners were conveyed across the Delaware by Johnson's Ferry, into Pennsylvania; the private soldiers were marched off immediately to Newtown; the officers, twenty-three in number, remained in a small chamber in the Ferry House, where, according to their own account, they passed a dismal night; sore at heart that their recent triumphs at White Plains and Fort Washington should be so suddenly eclipsed.

On the following morning they were conducted to Newtown under the escort of Colonel Weedon. His exterior, writes Lieutenant Piel, spoke but little in his favor, yet he won all our hearts by his kind and friendly conduct.

At Newtown the officers were quartered in inns and private houses, the soldiers in the church and jail. The officers paid a visit to Lord Stirling, whom some of them had known from his being captured at Long Island. He received them with great

kindness. "Your general, Van Heister," said he, "treated me like a brother when I was a prisoner, and so, gentlemen, will you be treated by me."

"We had scarce seated ourselves," continues Lieutenant Piel, "when a long, meagre, dark-looking man, whom we took for the parson of the place, stepped forth and held a discourse in German, in which he endeavored to set forth the justice of the American side in this war. He told us he was a Hanoverian born; called the King of England nothing but the Elector of Hanover, and spoke of him so contemptuously that his garrulity became intolerable. We answered that we had not come to America to inquire which party was in the right; but to fight for the king.

"Lord Stirling, seeing how little we were edified by the preacher, relieved us from him by proposing to take us with him to visit General Washington. The latter received us very courteously, though we understood very little of what he said, as he spoke nothing but English, a language in which none of us at that time were strong. In his aspect shines forth nothing of the great man that he is universally considered. His eyes have scarce any fire. There is, however, a smiling expression on his countenance when he speaks, that wins affection and respect. He invited four of our officers to dine with him; the rest dined with Lord Stirling." One of those who dined with the commander-in-chief, was the satirical lieutenant whom we have so often quoted, and who was stationed at the picket on the morning of the attack. However disparagingly he may have thought of his unfortunate commander, he evidently had a very good opinion of himself.

"General Washington," writes he in his journal, "did me the honor to converse a good deal with me concerning the unfortunate affair. I told him freely my opinion that our dispositions had been bad, otherwise we should not have fallen into his hands. He asked me if I could have made better dispositions, and in what manner? I told him yes; stated all the faults of our arrangements, and showed him how I would have done; and would have managed to come out of the affair with honor."

We have no doubt, from the specimens furnished in the lieutenant's journal, that he went largely into his own merits and achievements, and the demerits and short-comings of his luckless commander. Washington, he added, not only applauded his exposition of what he would have done, but made him a eulogy thereupon, and upon his watchfulness and the defense he had made with his handful of men when his picket was

attacked. Yet according to his own account, in his journal, with all his watchfulness, he came near being caught napping.

"General Washington," continues he, "is a courteous and polite man, but very cautious and reserved; talks little; and has a crafty (listige) physiognomy." We surmise the lieutenant had the most of the talk on that occasion, and that the crafty or sly expression in Washington's physiognomy may have been a lurking but suppressed smile, provoked by the lieutenant's self-laudation and wordiness.

The Hessian prisoners were subsequently transferred from place to place, until they reached Winchester in the interior of Virginia. Whenever they arrived, people thronged from far and near to see these terrible beings of whom they had received such formidable accounts; and where surprised and disappointed to find them looking like other men. At first they had to endure the hootings and revilings of the multitude, for having hired themselves out to the trade of blood; and they especially speak of the scoldings they received from old women in the villages, who upbraided them for coming to rob them of their liberty. "At length," writes the corporal in his journal, "General Washington had written notices put up in town and country, that we were innocent of this war and had joined in it not of our free will, but through compulsion. We should, therefore, be treated not as enemies, but friends. From this time," adds he, "things went better with us. Every day came many out of the towns, old and young, rich and poor, and brought us provisions, and treated us with kindness and humanity."*

CHAPTER XIV.

EPISODE.—COLONEL GRIFFIN IN THE JERSEYS.—DONOP DECOYED.—INROAD OF CADWALADER AND REED.—RETREAT AND CONFUSION OF THE ENEMY'S OUTPOSTS.—WASHINGTON RECROSSES THE DELAWARE WITH HIS TROOPS.—THE GAME REVERSED.—THE HESSIANS HUNTED BACK THROUGH THE COUNTRY.—WASHINGTON MADE MILITARY DICTATOR.

THERE was a kind of episode in the affair at Trenton. Colonel Griffin, who had thrown himself previously into the Jerseys with his detachment of Pennsylvania militia, found himself, through indisposition and the scanty number of his troops, unable to render efficient service in the proposed attack. He

* Tagebuch des Corporal Johannes Reuber.—MS.

sent word to Cadwalader, therefore, that he should probably render him more real aid by making a demonstration in front of Donop, and drawing him off so far into the interior as to be out of the way of rendering support to Colonel Rahl.

He accordingly presented himself in sight of Donop's cantonment on the 25th of December, and succeeded in drawing him out with nearly his whole force of two thousand men. He then retired slowly before him, skirmishing, but avoiding anything like an action, until he had lured him as far as Mount Holly; when he left him to find his way back to his post at his leisure.

The cannonade of Washington's attack in Trenton on the morning of the 26th, was distinctly heard at Cadwalader's camp at Bristol. Imperfect tidings of the result reached there about eleven o'clock, and produced the highest exultation and excitement. Cadwalader made another attempt to cross the river and join Washington, whom he supposed to be still in the Jerseys, following up the blow he had struck. He could not effect the passage of the river with the most of the troops, until midday of the 27th, when he received from Washington a detailed account of his success, and of his having recrossed into Pennsylvania.

Cadwalader was now in a dilemma. Donop, he presumed, was still at Mount Holly, whither Griffin had decoyed him; but he might soon march back. His forces were equal, if not superior in number to his own, and veterans instead of raw militia. But then there was the glory of rivaling the exploit at Trenton, and the importance of following out the effort for the relief of the Jerseys, and the salvation of Philadelphia. Besides, Washington, in all probability, after disposing of his prisoners, had again crossed into the Jerseys and might be acting offensively.

Reed relieved Cadwalader from his dilemma, by proposing that they should push on to Burlington, and there determine, according to intelligence, whether to proceed to Bordentown or Mount Holly. The plan was adopted. There was an alarm that the Hessian yagers lurked in a neighboring wood. Reed, accompanied by two officers, rode in advance to reconnoiter. He sent word to Cadwalader that it was a false alarm, and the latter took up his line of march.

Reed and his companions spurred on to reconnoiter the enemy's outposts, about four miles from Burlington, but pulled up at the place where the picket was usually stationed. There was no smoke, nor any sign of a human being. They rode up and found the place deserted. From the country people in the

neighborhood they received an explanation. Count Donop had returned to his post from the pursuit of Griffin, only in time to hear of the disaster at Trenton. He immediately began a retreat in the utmost panic and confusion, calling in his guards and parties as he hurried forward. The troops in the neighborhood of Burlington had decamped precipitately the preceding evening.

Colonel Reed sent back intelligence of this to Cadwalader, and still pushed on with his companions. As they rode along, they observed the inhabitants pulling down red rags which had been nailed to their doors; tory signs to insure good-will from the British. Arrived at Bordentown not an enemy was to be seen; the fugitives from Trenton had spread a panic on the 26th, and the Hessians and their refugee adherents had fled in confusion, leaving their sick behind them. The broken and haggard looks of the inhabitants showed what they had suffered during the Hessian occupation. One of Reed's companions returned to Cadwalader, who had halted at Burlington, and advised him to proceed.

Cadwalader wrote in the night to Washington, informing him of his whereabouts, and that he should march for Bordentown in the morning. "If you should think proper to cross over," added he, "it may easily be effected at the place where we passed; a pursuit would keep up the panic. They went off with great precipitation, and pressed all the wagons in their reach; I am told many of them are gone to South Amboy. If we can drive them from West Jersey, the success will raise an army next spring, and establish the credit of the continental money to support it."

There was another letter from Cadwalader, dated on the following day, from Bordentown. He had eighteen hundred men with him. Five hundred more were on the way to join him. General Mifflin, too, had sent over five hundred from Philadelphia, and three hundred from Burlington, and was to follow with seven or eight hundred more.

Colonel Reed, too, wrote from Trenton on the 28th. He had found that place without a single soldier of either army, and in a still more wretched condition than Bordentown. He urged Washington to recross the river, and pursue the advantages already gained. Donop might be overtaken before he could reach Princeton or Brunswick, where the enemy were yet in force.*

Washington needed no prompting of the kind. Bent upon following up his blow, he had barely allowed his troops a day

* *Life and Correspondence of Pres. Reed*, vol. i. p. 281.

or two to recover from recent exposure and fatigue, that they might have strength and spirit to pursue the retreating enemy, beat up other of their quarters, and entirely reverse affairs in the Jerseys. In this spirit he had written to Generals McDougall and Maxwell at Morristown, to collect as large a body of militia as possible, and harass the enemy in flank and rear. Heath, also, had been ordered to abandon the Highlands, which there was no need of guarding at this season of the year, and hasten down with the eastern militia, as rapidly as possible, by the way of Hackensack, continuing on until he should send him further orders. "A fair opportunity is offered," said he, "of driving the enemy entirely from the Jerseys, or at least to the extremity of the province."

Men of influence also were despatched by him into different parts of the Jerseys, to spirit up the militia to revenge the oppression, the ravage, and insults they had experienced from the enemy, especially from the Hessians. "If what they have suffered," said he, "does not rouse their resentment, they must not possess the feelings of humanity."

On the 29th his troops began to cross the river. It would be a slow and difficult operation, owing to the ice; two parties of light troops, therefore, were detached in advance, whom Colonel Reed was to send in pursuit of the enemy. They marched into Trenton about two o'clock, and were immediately put on the traces of Donop, to hang on his rear and harass him until other troops should come up. Cadwalader also detached a party of riflemen from Bordentown with like orders. Donop, in retreating, had divided his force, sending one part by a cross-road to Princeton, and hurrying on with the remainder to Brunswick. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and the wretchedness of the road, it was a service of animation and delight to the American troops to hunt back these Hessians through the country they had recently outraged, and over ground which they themselves had trodden so painfully and despondingly in their retreat. In one instance the riflemen surprised and captured a party of refugees who lingered in the rear-guard, among whom were several newly-made officers. Never was there a more sudden reversal in the game of war than this retreat of the heavy German veterans, harassed by light parties of a raw militia, which they so lately had driven like chaff before them.

While this was going on, Washington was effecting the passage of his main force to Trenton. He himself had crossed on the 29th of December, but it took two days more to get the troops and artillery over the icy river, and that with great labor

and difficulty. And now came a perplexity. With the year expired the term of several regiments, which had seen most service, and become inured to danger. Knowing how indispensable were such troops to lead on those which were raw and undisciplined, Washington had them paraded and invited to reënlist. It was a difficult task to persuade them. They were haggard with fatigue, and hardship, and privation of every kind; and their hearts yearned for home. By the persuasions of their officers, however, and a bounty of ten dollars, the greater proportion of those from the eastward were induced to remain six weeks longer.

Hard money was necessary in this emergency. How was it to be furnished? The military chest was incompetent. On the 30th, Washington wrote by express to Robert Morris, the patriot financier at Philadelphia, whom he knew to be eager that the blow should be followed up. "If you could possibly collect a sum, if it were but one hundred, or one hundred and fifty pounds, it would be of service."

Morris received the letter in the evening. He was at his wit's end to raise the sum, for hard money was scarce. Fortunately a wealthy Quaker in this moment of exigency supplied the "sinews of war," and early the next morning the money was forwarded by the express.

At this critical moment, too, Washington received a letter from a committee of Congress, transmitting him resolves of that body dated the 27th of December, investing him with military powers quite dictatorial. "Happy is it for this country," write the committee, "that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty, or property, be in the least degree endangered thereby."*

Washington's acknowledgment of this great mark of confidence was noble and characteristic. "I find Congress have done me the honor to intrust me with powers, in my military capacity, of the highest nature and almost unlimited extent. Instead of thinking myself freed from all *civil* obligations by this mark of their confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind that, as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1510.

CHAPTER XV.

HOWE HEARS OF THE AFFAIR AT TRENTON.—CORNWALLIS SENT BACK TO THE JERSEYS.—RECONNOITERING EXPEDITION OF REED.—HIS EXPLOITS.—WASHINGTON IN PERIL AT TRENTON.—REINFORCED BY TROOPS UNDER CADWALADER AND MIFFLIN.—POSITION OF HIS MEN.—CORNWALLIS AT TRENTON.—REPULSED AT THE ASSUNPINK.—THE AMERICAN CAMP MENACED.—NIGHT MARCH OF WASHINGTON.—AFFAIR AT PRINCETON.—DEATH OF MERCER.—ROUT OF BRITISH TROOPS.—PURSUED BY WASHINGTON.—CORNWALLIS AT PRINCETON.—BAFFLED AND PERPLEXED.—WASHINGTON AT MORRISTOWN.—HIS SYSTEM OF ANNOYANCE.—THE TABLES TURNED UPON THE ENEMY.

GENERAL HOWE was taking his ease in winter quarters at New York, waiting for the freezing of the Delaware to pursue his triumphant march to Philadelphia, when tidings were brought him of the surprise and capture of the Hessians at Trenton. "That three old established regiments of a people who made war their profession, should lay down their arms to a ragged and undisciplined militia, and that with scarcely any loss on either side," was a matter of amazement. He instantly stopped Lord Cornwallis, who was on the point of embarking for England, and sent him back in all haste to resume the command in the Jerseys.

The ice in the Delaware impeded the crossing of the American troops, and gave the British time to draw in their scattered cantonments and assemble their whole force at Princeton. While his troops were yet crossing, Washington sent out Colonel Reed to reconnoiter the position and movements of the enemy and obtain information. Six of the Philadelphia light horse, spirited young fellows, but who had never seen service, volunteered to accompany Reed. They patrolled the country to the very vicinity of Princeton, but could collect no information from the inhabitants; who were harassed, terrified, and bewildered by the ravaging marches to and fro of friend and enemy.

Emerging from a wood almost within view of Princeton, they caught sight, from a rising ground, of two or three red-coats passing from time to time from a barn to a dwelling-house.

Here must be an outpost. Keeping the barn in a line with the house so as to cover their approach, they dashed up to the latter without being discovered, and surrounded it. Twelve British dragoons were within, who, though well armed, were so panic-stricken that they surrendered without making defense. A commissary, also, was taken; the sergeant of the dragoons alone escaped. Colonel Reed and his six cavaliers returned in triumph to head-quarters. Important information was obtained from their prisoners. Lord Cornwallis had joined General Grant the day before at Princeton, with a reinforcement of chosen troops. They had now seven or eight thousand men, and were pressing wagons for a march upon Trenton.*

Cadwalader, stationed at Crosswicks, about seven miles distant, between Bordentown and Trenton, sent intelligence to the same purport, received by him from a young gentleman who had escaped from Princeton.

Word, too, was brought from other quarters, that General Howe was on the march with a thousand light troops with which he had landed at Amboy.

The situation of Washington was growing critical. The enemy were beginning to advance their large pickets towards Trenton. Everything indicated an approaching attack. The force with him was small; to retreat across the river would destroy the dawn of hope awakened in the bosoms of the Jersey militia by the late exploit; but to make a stand without reinforcements was impossible. In this emergency, he called to his aid General Cadwalader from Crosswicks, and General Mifflin from Bordentown, with their collective forces, amounting to about three thousand six hundred men. He did it with reluctance, for it seemed like involving them in the common danger; but the exigency of the case admitted of no alternative. They promptly answered to his call, and marching in the night, joined him on the 1st of January.

Washington chose a position for his main body on the east side of the Assunpink. There was a narrow stone bridge across it, where the water was very deep—the same bridge over which part of Rahl's brigade had escaped in the recent affair. He planted his artillery so as to command the bridge and the fords. His advance guard was stationed about three miles off in a wood, having in front a stream called Shabbakong Creek.

Early on the morning of the 2d, came certain word that Cornwallis was approaching with all his force. Strong parties were sent out under General Greene, who skirmished with the

* *Life of Reed*, i. 282.

enemy and harassed them in their advance. By twelve o'clock they reached the Shabbakong, and halted for a time on its northern bank. Then crossing it, and moving forward with rapidity, they drove the advance guard out of the woods, and pushed on until they reached a high ground near the town. Here Hand's corps of several battalions was drawn up, and held them for a time in check. All the parties in advance ultimately retreated to the main body, on the east side of the Assunpink, and found some difficulty in crowding across the narrow bridge.

From all these checks and delays, it was nearly sunset before Cornwallis with the head of his army entered Trenton. His rear-guard under General Leslie rested at Maiden Head, about six miles distant, and nearly half way between Trenton and Princeton. Forming his troop into columns, he now made repeated attempts to cross the Assunpink at the bridge and the fords, but was as often repulsed by the artillery. For a part of the time Washington, mounted on a white horse, stationed himself at the south end of the bridge, issuing his orders. Each time the enemy was repulsed there was a shout along the American lines. At length they drew off, came to a halt, and lighted their camp fires. The American did the same, using the neighboring fences for the purpose. Sir William Erskine, who was with Cornwallis, urged him, it is said, to attack Washington that evening in his camp; but his lordship declined; he felt sure of the game which had so often escaped him; he had at length, he thought, got Washington into a situation from which he could not escape, but where he might make a desperate stand, and he was willing to give his wearied troops a night's repose to prepare them for the closing struggle. He would be sure, he said, to "bag the fox in the morning."

A cannonade was kept up on both sides until dark; but with little damage to the Americans. When night closed in, the two camps lay in sight of each other's fires, ruminating the bloody action of the following day. It was the most gloomy and anxious night that had yet closed in on the American army, throughout its series of perils and disasters; for there was no concealing the impending danger. But what must have been the feelings of the commander-in-chief, as he anxiously patrolled his camp, and considered his desperate position? A small stream, fordable in several places, was all that separated his raw, inexperienced army, from an enemy vastly superior in numbers and discipline, and stung to action by the mortification of a late defeat. A general action with them must be ruinous; but how was he to retreat? Behind him was the Delaware, impassable from floating ice. Granting even (a thing not to be

hoped) that a retreat across it could be effected, the consequences would be equally fatal. The Jerseys would be left in possession of the enemy, endangering the immediate capture of Philadelphia, and sinking the public mind into despondency.

In this darkest of moments a gleam of hope flashed upon his mind: a bold expedient suggested itself. Almost the whole of the enemy's force must by this time be drawn out of Princeton, and advancing by detachments toward Trenton, while their baggage and principal stores must remain weakly guarded at Brunswick. Was it not possible by a rapid night-march along the Quaker road, a different road from that on which General Leslie with the rear-guard was resting, to get past that force undiscovered, come by surprise upon those left at Princeton, capture or destroy what stores were left there, and then push on to Brunswick? This would save the army from being cut off; would avoid the appearance of a defeat; and might draw the enemy away from Trenton, while some fortunate stroke might give additional reputation to the American arms. Even should the enemy march on to Philadelphia, it could not in any case be prevented; while a counter-blow in the Jerseys would be of great consolation.

Such was the plan which Washington revolved in his mind on the gloomy banks of the Assunpink, and which he laid before his officers in a council of war, held after nightfall, at the quarters of General Mercer. It met with instant concurrence, being of that hardy, adventurous kind, which seems congenial with the American character. One formidable difficulty presented itself. The weather was unusually mild; there was a thaw, by which the roads might be rendered deep and miry and almost impassable. Fortunately, or rather providentially, as Washington was prone to consider it, the wind veered to the north in the course of the evening; the weather became intensely cold, and in two hours the roads were once more hard and frost-bound. In the meantime, the baggage of the army was silently removed to Burlington, and every other preparation was made for a rapid march. To deceive the enemy, men were employed to dig trenches near the bridge within hearing of the British sentries, with orders to continue noisily at work until daybreak; others were to go the rounds; relieve guards at the bridge and fords; keep up the camp fires and maintain all the appearance of a regular encampment. At daybreak they were to hasten after the army.

In the dead of the night, the army drew quietly out of the encampment and began its march. General Mercer mounted on a favorite gray horse, was in the advance with the remnant

of his flying camp, now but about three hundred and fifty men, principally relics of the brave Delaware and Maryland regiments, with some of the Pennsylvania militia. Among the latter were youths belonging to the best families in Philadelphia. The main body followed, under Washington's immediate command.

The Quaker road was a complete roundabout, joining the main road about two miles from Princeton, where Washington expected to arrive before daybreak. The road, however, was new and rugged; cut through woods, where the stumps of trees broke the wheels of some of the baggage trains, and retarded the march of the troops; so that it was near sunrise of a bright frosty morning, when Washington reached the bridge over Stony Brook, about three miles from Princeton. After crossing the bridge, he led his troops along the bank of the brook to the edge of a wood, where a by-road led off on the right through low grounds, and was said by the guides to be a short cut to Princeton, and less exposed to view. By this road Washington defiled with the main body, ordering Mercer to continue along the brook with his brigade, until he should arrive at the main road, where he was to secure, and if possible destroy, a bridge over which it passes; so as to intercept any fugitives from Princeton, and check any retrograde movements of the British troops which might have advanced towards Trenton.

Hitherto the movements of the Americans had been undiscovered by the enemy. Three regiments of the latter, the 17th, 40th, and 55th, with three troops of dragoons, had been quartered all night in Princeton, under marching orders to join Lord Cornwallis in the morning. The 17th regiment under Colonel Mawhood, was already on the march; the 55th regiment was preparing to follow. Mawhood had crossed the bridge by which the old or main road to Trenton passes over stony Brook, and was proceeding through a wood beyond, when, as he attained the summit of a hill about sunrise, the glittering of arms betrayed to him the movement of Mercer's troops to the left, who were filing along the Quaker road to secure the bridge, as they had been ordered.

The woods prevented him from seeing their number. He supposed them to be some broken portion of the American army flying before Lord Cornwallis. With this idea, he faced about and made a retrograde movement, to intercept them or hold them in check; while messengers spurred off at all speed, to hasten forward the regiments still lingering at Princeton, so as completely to surround them.

The woods concealed him until he had recrossed the bridge of Stony Brook, when he came in full sight of the van of Mercer's brigade. Both parties pushed to get possession of a rising ground on the right near the house of a Mr. Clark, of the peaceful Society of Friends. The Americans being nearest, reached it first, and formed behind a hedge fence which extended along a slope in front of the house; whence being chiefly armed with rifles, they opened a destructive fire. It was returned with great spirit by the enemy, At the first discharge Mercer was dismounted, "his gallant gray" being crippled by a musket ball in the leg. One of his colonels, also, was mortally wounded and carried to the rear. Availing themselves of the confusion thus occasioned, the British charged with the bayonet; the American riflemen, having no weapon of the kind, were thrown into disorder and retreated. Mercer, who was on foot, endeavored to rally them when a blow from the butt end of a musket felled him to the ground. He rose and defended himself with his sword, but was surrounded, bayoneted repeatedly, and left for dead.

Mawhood pursued the broken and retreating troops to the brow of the rising ground, on which Clark's house was situated, when he beheld a large force emerging from a wood and advancing to the rescue. It was a body of Pennsylvania militia, which Washington, on hearing the firing, had detached to the support of Mercer. Mawhood instantly ceased pursuit, drew up his artillery, and by a heavy discharge brought the militia to a stand.

At this moment Washington himself arrived at the scene of action, having galloped from the by-road in advance of his troops. From a rising ground he beheld Mercer's troops retreating in confusion, and the detachment of militia checked by Mawhood's artillery. Everything was at peril. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed past the hesitating militia, waving his hat and cheering them on. His commanding figure and white horse made him a conspicuous object for the enemy's marksmen, but he heeded it not. Galloping forward under the fire of Mawhood's battery, he called upon Mercer's broken brigade. The Pennsylvanians rallied at the sound of his voice, and caught fire from his example. At the same time the 7th Virginia regiment emerged from the wood, and moved forward with loud cheers, while a fire of grapeshot was opened by Captain Moulder of the American artillery, from the brow of a ridge to the south.

Colonel Mawhood, who a moment before had thought his triumph secure, found himself assailed on every side, and separated from the other British regiments. He fought, however,

with great bravery, and for a short time the action was desperate. Washington was in the midst of it; equally endangered by the random fire of his own men, and the artillery and musketry of the enemy. His aide-de-camp, Colonel Fitzgerald, a young and ardent Irishman, losing sight of him in the heat of the fight when enveloped in dust and smoke, dropped the bridle on the neck of his horse and drew his hat over his eyes, giving him up for lost. When he saw him, however, emerge from the cloud, waving his hat, and beheld the enemy giving way, he spurred up to his side. "Thank God," said he, "your Excellency is safe!" "Away, my dear colonel, and bring up the troops," was the reply; "the day is our own!" It was one of those occasions in which the latent fire of Washington's character blazed forth.

Mawhood, by this time, had forced his way, at the point of the bayonet, through gathering foes, though with heavy loss, back to the main road, and was in full retreat towards Trenton to join Cornwallis. Washington detached Major Kelly with a party of Pennsylvania troops, to destroy the bridge at Stony Brook, over which Mawhood had retreated, so as to impede the advance of General Leslie from Maiden Head.

In the meantime the 55th regiment, which had been on the left and nearer Princeton, had been encountered by the American advance guard under General St. Clair, and after some sharp fighting in a ravine had given away, and was retreating across fields and along a by-road to Brunswick. The remaining regiment, the 40th, had not been able to come up in time for the action; a part of it fled toward Brunswick; the residue took refuge in the college at Princeton, recently occupied by them as barracks. Artillery was now brought to bear on the college, and a few shot compelled those within to surrender.

In this brief but brilliant action, about one hundred of the British were left dead on the field, and nearly three hundred taken prisoners, fourteen of whom were officers. Among the slain was Captain Leslie, son of the Earl of Leven. His death was greatly lamented by his captured companions.

The loss of the Americans was about twenty-five or thirty men and several officers. Among the latter was Colonel Haslet, who had distinguished himself throughout the campaign, by being among the foremost in services of danger. He was indeed a gallant officer, and gallantly seconded by his Delaware troops.

A greater loss was that of General Mercer. He was said to be either dead or dying, in the house of Mr. Clark, whither he had been conveyed by his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, who

found him, after the retreat of Mawhood's troops, lying on the field gashed with several wounds, and insensible from cold and loss of blood. Washington would have ridden back from Princeton to visit him, and have him conveyed to a place of greater security; but was assured, that, if alive, he was too desperately wounded to bear removal; in the meantime he was in good hands, being faithfully attended to by his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, and treated with the utmost care and kindness by Mr. Clark's family.*

Under these circumstances Washington felt compelled to leave his old companion in arms to his fate. Indeed, he was called away by the exigencies of his command, having to pursue the routed regiments which were making a headlong retreat to Brunswick. In this pursuit he took the lead at the head of a detachment of cavalry. At Kingston, however, three miles to the northeast of Princeton, he pulled up, restrained his ardor, and held a council of war on horseback. Should he keep on to Brunswick or not? The capture of the British stores and baggage would make his triumph complete; but, on the other hand, his troops were excessively fatigued by their rapid march all night and hard fight in the morning. All of them had been one night without sleep, and some of them two, and many were half-starved. They were without blankets, thinly clad, some of them bare-footed, and this in freezing weather. Cornwallis would be upon them before they could reach Brunswick. His rear-guard, under General Leslie, had been quartered but six miles from Princeton, and the retreating troops must have roused them. Under these considerations, it was determined to discontinue the pursuit and push for Morristown. There they would be in a mountainous country, heavily wooded, in an abundant neighborhood, and on the flank of the enemy, with various defiles by which they might change their position according to his movements.

Filing off to the left, therefore, from Kingston, and breaking down the bridges behind him, Washington took the narrow road by Rocky Hill to Pluckamin. His troops were so exhausted, that many in the course of the march would lie down in the woods on the frozen ground and fall asleep, and were with difficulty roused and cheered forward. At Pluckamin he halted for a time, to allow them a little repose and refreshment. While they are taking breath we will cast our eyes back to the camp of Cornwallis, to see what was the effect upon him of this masterly movement of Washington. His lordship had retired to rest at Trenton with the sportsman's vaunt that he would

* See Washington to Colonel Reed, Jan. 15.

“bag the fox in the morning.” Nothing could surpass his surprise and chagrin when at daybreak the expiring watchfires and deserted camp of the Americans told him that the prize had once more evaded his grasp; that the general whose military skill he had decried had outgeneralled him.

For a time he could not learn whither the army, which had stolen away so silently, had directed its stealthy march. By sunrise, however, there was the booming of cannon, like the rumbling of distant thunder, in the direction of Princeton. The idea flashed upon him that Washington had not merely escaped, but was about to make a dash at the British magazines at Brunswick. Alarmed for the safety of his military stores, his lordship forthwith broke up his camp, and made a rapid march towards Princeton. As he arrived in sight of the bridge over Stony Brook, he beheld Major Kelly and his party busy in its destruction. A distant discharge of round shot from his field-pieces drove them away, but the bridge was already broken. It would take time to repair it for the passage of the artillery; so Cornwallis in his impatience urged his troops breast-high through the turbulent and icy stream, and again pushed forward. He was brought to a stand by the discharge of a thirty-two pounder from a distant breastwork. Supposing the Americans to be there in force, and prepared to make resistance, he sent out some horsemen to reconnoiter, and advanced to storm the battery. There was no one there. The thirty-two pounder had been left behind by the Americans, as too unwieldy, and a match had been applied to it by some lingerer of Washington's rearguard.

Without further delay Cornwallis hurried forward, eager to save his magazines. Crossing the bridge at Kingston, he kept on along the Brunswick road, supposing Washington still before him. The latter had got far in the advance, during the delays caused by the broken bridge at Stony Brook, and the discharge of the thirty-two pounder; and the alteration of his course at Kingston had carried him completely out of the way of Cornwallis. His lordship reached Brunswick towards evening, and endeavored to console himself, by the safety of the military stores, for being so completely foiled and out-manœvered.

Washington, in the meantime, was all on the alert; the lion part of his nature was aroused; and while his weary troops were in a manner panting upon the ground around him, he was despatching missives and calling out aid to enable him to follow up his successes. In a letter to Putnam, written from Pluckamin during the halt, he says: “The enemy appear to be panic-

struck. I am in hopes of driving them out of the Jerseys. March the troops under your command to Crosswicks, and keep a strict watch upon the enemy in this quarter. Keep as many spies out as you think proper. A number of horsemen in the dress of the country must be kept constantly going backwards and forwards for this purpose. If you discover any motion of the enemy of consequence, let me be informed thereof as soon as possible, by express."

To General Heath, also, who was stationed in the Highlands of the Hudson, he wrote at the same hurried moment. "The enemy are in great consternation; and as the panic affords us a favorable opportunity to drive them out of the Jerseys, it has been determined in council that you should move down towards New York with a considerable force, as if you had a design upon the city. That being an object of great importance, the enemy will be reduced to the necessity of withdrawing a considerable part of their force from the Jerseys, if not the whole, to secure the city."

These letters despatched, he continued forward to Morristown, where at length he came to a halt from his incessant and harassing marchings. There he learnt that General Mercer was still alive. He immediately sent his own nephew, Major George Lewis, under the protection of a flag, to attend upon him. Mercer had indeed been kindly nursed by a daughter of Mr. Clark and a negro woman, who had not been frightened from their home by the storm of battle which raged around it. At the time that the troops of Cornwallis approached, Major Armstrong was binding up Mercer's wounds. The latter insisted on his leaving him in the kind hands of Mr. Clark's household, and rejoining the army. Lewis found him languishing in great pain; he had been treated with respect by the enemy, and great tenderness by the benevolent family who had sheltered him. He expired in the arms of Major Lewis on the 12th of January, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Dr. Benjamin Rush, afterwards celebrated as a physician, was with him when he died.

He was upright, intelligent, and brave; esteemed as a soldier and beloved as a man, and by none more so than by Washington. His career as a general had been brief; but long enough to secure him a lasting renown. His name remains one of the consecrated names of the Revolution.

From Morristown, Washington again wrote to General Heath, repeating his former orders. To Major-general Lincoln, also, who was just arrived at Peekskill, and had command of the Massachusetts militia, he writes on the 7th, "General Heath

will communicate mine of this date to you, by which you will find that the greater part of your troops are to move down towards New York, to draw the attention of the enemy to that quarter; and if they do not throw a considerable body back again, you may, in all probability, carry the city, or at least blockade them in it. . . . Be as expeditious as possible in moving forward, for the sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed the better. If we can oblige them to evacuate the Jerseys, we must drive them to the utmost distress; for they have depended upon the supplies from that State for their winter's support."

Colonel Reed was ordered to send out rangers and bodies of militia to scour the country, waylay foraging parties, cut off supplies, and keep the cantonments of the enemy in a state of siege. "I would not suffer a man to stir beyond their lines," writes Washington, "nor suffer them to have the least communication with the country."

The expedition under General Heath toward New York, from which much had been anticipated by Washington, proved a failure. It moved in three divisions, by different routes, but all arriving nearly at the same time at the enemy's outpost at King's Bridge. There was some skirmishing, but the great feature of the expedition was a pompous and peremptory summons of Fort Independence to surrender. "Twenty minutes only can be allowed," said Heath, "for the garrison to give their answer, and should it be in the negative, they must abide the consequences." The garrison made no answer but an occasional cannonade. Heath failed to follow up his summons by corresponding deeds. He hovered and skirmished for some days about the outposts and Spyt den Duivel Creek, and then retired before a threatened snow-storm, and the report of an enemy's fleet from Rhode Island, with troops under Lord Percy, who might land in Westchester, and take the besieging force in rear.

Washington, while he spoke of Heath's failure with indulgence in his despatches to government, could not but give him a rebuke in a private letter. "Your summons," writes he, "as you did not attempt to fulfill your threats, was not only idle, but farcical; and will not fail of turning the laugh exceedingly upon us. These things I mention to you as a friend, for you will perceive that they have composed no part of my public letter."

But though disappointed in this part of his plan, Washington, having received reinforcements of militia, continued, with his scanty army, to carry on his system of annoyance. The

situation of Cornwallis, who but a short time before traversed the Jerseys so triumphantly, became daily more and more irksome. Spies were in his camp, to give notice of every movement, and foes without to take advantage of it; so that not a foraging party could sally forth without being waylaid. By degrees he drew in his troops which were posted about the country, and collected them at New Brunswick and Amboy, so as to have a communication by water with New York, whence he was now compelled to draw nearly all his supplies; "presenting," to use the words of Hamilton, "the extraordinary spectacle of a powerful army, straitened within narrow limits by the phantom of a military force; and never permitted to transgress those limits with impunity."

In fact, the recent operations in the Jerseys had suddenly changed the whole aspect of the war, and given a triumphant close to what had been a disastrous campaign.

The troops, which for months had been driven from post to post, apparently an undisciplined rabble, had all at once turned upon their pursuers, and astounded them by brilliant stratagems and daring exploits. The commander, whose cautious policy had been sneered at by enemies, and regarded with impatience by misjudging friends, had all at once shown that he possessed enterprise as well as circumspection, energy as well as endurance, and that beneath his wary coldness lurked a fire to break forth at the proper moment. This year's campaign, the most critical one of the war, and especially the part of it which occurred in the Jerseys, was the ordeal that made his great qualities fully appreciated by his countrymen, and gained for him from the statesmen and generals of Europe the appellation of the *AMERICAN FABIUS*.

CHAPTER XVI.

BURKE ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN AMERICA.—NEW JERSEY ROUSED TO ARMS.—WASHINGTON GRANTS SAFE CONDUCT TO HESSIAN CONVOYS—ENCAMPMENT AT MORRISTOWN.—PUTNAM AT PRINCETON.—HIS STRATAGEM TO CONCEAL THE WEAKNESS OF HIS CAMP.—EXPLOIT OF GENERAL DICKINSON NEAR SOMERSET COURT-HOUSE.—WASHINGTON'S COUNTER PROCLAMATION—PREVALENCE OF THE SMALL-POX.—INOCULATION OF THE ARMY.—CONTRAST OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN COMMANDERS AND THEIR CAMPS.

THE news of Washington's recrossing the Delaware, and of his subsequent achievements in the Jerseys, had not reached London on the 9th of January. "The affairs of America seem to be drawing to a crisis," writes Edmund Burke. "The Howes are at this time in possession of, or able to awe the whole middle coast of America, from Delaware to the western boundary of Massachusetts Bay; the naval barrier on the side of Canada is broken. A great tract is open for the supply of the troops; the river Hudson opens a way into the heart of the provinces, and nothing can, in all probability, prevent an early and offensive campaign. What the Americans have done is, in their circumstances, truly astonishing; it is indeed infinitely more than I expected from them. But, having done so much for some short time, I began to entertain an opinion that they might do more. It is now, however, evident that they cannot look standing armies in the face. They are inferior in everything—even in numbers. There seem by the best accounts not to be above ten or twelve thousand men at most in their grand army. The rest are militia, and not wonderfully well composed or disciplined. They decline a general engagement; prudently enough, if their object had been to make the war attend upon a treaty of good terms of subjection; but when they look further, this will not do. An army that is obliged at all times, and in all situations, to decline an engagement, may delay their ruin, but can never defend their country." *

At the time when this was written, the Howes had learnt, to their mortification, that "the mere running through a province, is not subduing it." The British commanders had been

* Burke's *Works*, vol. v. p. 125.

outgeneraled, attacked, and defeated. They had nearly been driven out of the Jerseys, and were now hemmed in and held in check by Washington and his handful of men castled among the heights of Morristown. So far from holding possession of the territory they had so recently overrun, they were fain to ask safe conduct across it for a convoy to their soldiers captured in battle. It must have been a severe trial to the pride of Cornwallis, when he had to inquire by letter of Washington, whether money and stores could be sent to the Hessians captured at Trenton, and a surgeon and medicines to the wounded at Princeton; and Washington's reply must have conveyed a reproof still more mortifying: No molestation, he assured his lordship, would be offered to the convoy by any part of the regular army under his command; but "*he could not answer for the militia, who were resorting to arms in most parts of the State, and were excessively exasperated at the treatment they had met with from both Hessian and British troops.*"

In fact, the conduct of the enemy had roused the whole country against them. The proclamations and printed protections of the British commanders, on the faith of which the inhabitants in general had stayed at home, and forbore to take up arms, had proved of no avail. The Hessians could not or would not understand them, but plundered friend and foe alike.* The British soldiery often followed their example, and the plunderings of both were at times attended by those brutal outrages on the weaker sex, which inflame the dullest spirits to revenge. The whole State was thus roused against its invaders. In Washington's retreat of more than a hundred miles through the Jerseys he had never been joined by more than one hundred of its inhabitants; now sufferers of both parties rose as one man to avenge their personal injuries. The late quiet yeomanry armed themselves, and scoured the country in small parties to seize on stragglers, and the militia began to signalize themselves in voluntary skirmishes with regular troops.

In effect, Washington ordered a safe conduct to be given to the Hessian baggage as far as Philadelphia, and to the surgeon and medicines to Princeton, and permitted a Hessian sergeant and twelve men, unarmed, to attend the baggage until it was delivered to their countrymen.

Morristown, where the main army was encamped, had not been chosen by Washington as a permanent post, but merely as a halting-place, where his troops might repose after their

* "These rascals plunder all indiscriminately, If they see anything they like, they say, 'Rebel good for Hesse-mans,' and seize upon it for their own use. They have no idea of the distinctions between whig and tory."—*Letter of Hazard the Postmaster.*

excessive fatigues and their sufferings from the inclement season. Further considerations persuaded him that it was well situated for the system of pretty warfare which he meditated, and induced him to remain there. It was protected by forests and rugged heights. All approach from the seaboard was rendered difficult and dangerous to a hostile force by a chain of sharp hills, extending from Pluckamin, by Boundbrook and Springfield, to the vicinity of the Passaic River, while various defiles in the rear afforded safer retreats into a fertile and well-peopled region.* It was nearly equidistant from Amboy, Newark, and Brunswick, the principal posts of the enemy; so that any movement made from them could be met by a counter movement on his part; while the forays and skirmishes by which he might harass them, would school and season his own troops. He had three faithful generals with him: Greene, his reliance on all occasions; swarthy Sullivan, whose excitable temper and quick sensibilities he had sometimes to keep in check by friendly counsels and rebukes, but who was a good officer, and loyally attached to him; and brave, genial, generous Knox, never so happy as when by his side. He had lately been advanced to the rank of brigadier at his recommendation, and commanded the artillery.

Washington's military family at this time was composed of his aides-de-camp, Colonels Meade and Tench Tilghman of Philadelphia, gentlemen of gallant spirit, amiable tempers, and cultivated manners; and his secretary, Colonel Robert H. Harrison of Maryland—the "old secretary," as he was familiarly called among his associates, and by whom he was described as "one in whom every man had confidence, and by whom no man was deceived."

Washington's head-quarters at first were in what was called the Freemason's Tavern, on the north side of the village green. His troops were encamped about the vicinity of the village, at first in tents, until they could build log huts for shelter against the winter's cold. The main encampment was near Bottle Hill, in a sheltered valley which was thickly wooded, and had abundant springs. It extended southeasterly from Morristown; and was called the Lowantica Valley, from the Indian name of a beautiful, limpid brook which ran through it, and lost itself in a great swamp.†

The enemy being now concentrated at New Brunswick and Amboy, General Putnam was ordered by Washington to move from Crosswicks to Princeton, with the troops under his com-

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. 1 p. 149.

† Notes of the Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, MS.

mand. He was instructed to draw his forage as much as possible from the neighborhood of Brunswick, about eighteen miles off, thereby contributing to distress the enemy; to have good scouting parties continually on the look-out; to keep nothing with him but what could be moved off at a moment's warning, and, if compelled to leave Princeton, to retreat towards the mountains, so as to form a junction with the forces at Morristown.

Putnam had with him but a few hundred men. "You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is," writes Washington; a common expedient with him in those times of scanty means. Putnam acted up to the advice. A British officer, Captain Macpherson, was lying desperately wounded at Princeton, and Putnam, in the kindness of his heart, was induced to send in a flag to Brunswick in quest of a friend and military comrade of the dying man, to attend him in his last moments and make his will. To prevent the weakness of the garrison from being discovered, the visitor was brought in after dark. Lights gleamed in all the college windows, and in the vacant houses about the town; the handful of troops capable of duty were marched hither and thither, and backward and forward, and paraded about to such effect, that the visitor on his return to the British camp, reported the force under the old general to be at least five thousand strong.*

Cantonments were gradually formed between Princeton and the Highlands of the Hudson, which made the left flank of Washington's position, and where General Heath had command. General Philemon Dickinson, who commanded the New Jersey militia, was stationed on the west side of Millstone River, near Somerset Court-house, one of the nearest posts to the enemy's camp at Brunswick. A British foraging party, of five or six hundred strong, sent out by Cornwallis with forty wagons and upward of a hundred draught horses, mostly of the English breed, having collected sheep and cattle about the country, were sacking a mill on the opposite side of the river, where a large quantity of flour was deposited. While thus employed, Dickinson set upon them with a force equal in number, but composed of raw militia and fifty Philadelphia riflemen. He dashed through the river, waist deep, with his men, and charged the enemy so suddenly and vigorously, that, though supported by three field-pieces, they gave way, left their convey, and retreated so precipitately, that he made only nine

* Sparks' *Am. Biography*, vol. vii. p. 196.

prisoners. A number of killed and wounded were carried off by the fugitives on light wagons.*

These exploits of the militia were noticed with high encomiums by Washington, while at the same time he was rigid in prohibiting and punishing the excesses into which men are apt to run when suddenly clothed with military power. Such is the spirit of a general order issued at this time. "The general prohibits, in both the militia and continental troops, the infamous practice of plundering the inhabitants under the specious pretense of their being tories. . . . It is our business to give protection and support to the poor distressed inhabitants, not to multiply and increase their calamities." After the publication of this order, all excesses of this kind were to be punished in the severest manner.

To counteract the proclamation of the British commissioners, promising amnesty to all in rebellion who should, in a given time, return to their allegiance, Washington now issued a counter proclamation (Jan. 25th), commanding every person who had subscribed a declaration of fidelity to Great Britain, or taken an oath of allegiance, to repair within thirty days to head-quarters, or the quarters to the nearest general office of the continental army or of the militia, and there take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America, and give up any protection, certificate, or passport he might have received from the enemy; at the same time granting full liberty to all such as preferred the interest and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happiness of their country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemy's lines. All who should neglect or refuse to comply with this order were to be considered adherents to the crown, and treated as common enemies.

This measure met with objections at the time, some of the timid or over-cautious thinking it inexpedient; others, jealous of the extraordinary powers vested in Washington, questioning whether he had not transcended these powers and exercised a degree of despotism.

The small-pox, which had been fatally prevalent in the preceding year, had again broken out, and Washington feared it might spread through the whole army. He took advantage of the interval of comparative quiet to have his troops inoculated. Houses were set apart in various places as hospitals for inoculation, and a church was appropriated for the use of those who had taken the malady in the natural way. Among these the

* Washington to the President of Congress. Also note to Sparks, vol. iv. p. 290.

ravages were frightful. The traditions of the place and neighborhood give lamentable pictures of the distress caused by this loathsome disease in the camp and in the villages, wherever it had not been parried by inoculation.

"Washington," we are told, "was not an unmoved spectator of the griefs around him; and might be seen in Hanover and in Lowantica Valley, cheering the faith and inspiring the courage of his suffering men."* It was this paternal care and sympathy which attached his troops personally to him. They saw that he regarded them, not with the eye of a general, but of a patriot, whose heart yearned towards them as countrymen suffering in one common cause.

A striking contrast was offered throughout the winter and spring, between the rival commanders, Howe at New York, and Washington at Morristown. Howe was a soldier by profession. War, with him, was a career. The camp was, for the time, country and home. Easy and indolent by nature, of convivial and luxurious habits, and somewhat addicted to gaming, he found himself in good quarters at New York, and was in no hurry to leave them. The Tories rallied around him. The British merchants residing there regarded him with profound devotion. His officers, too, many of them young men of rank and fortune, gave a gayety and brilliancy to the place; and the wealthy royalists forgot in a round of dinners, balls, and assemblies, the hysterical alarms they had once experienced under the military sway of Lee.

Washington, on the contrary, was a patriot soldier, grave, earnest, thoughtful, self-sacrificing. War, to him, was a painful remedy, hateful in itself, but adopted for a great national good. To the prosecution of it all his pleasures, his comforts, his natural inclinations and private interests were sacrificed; and his chosen officers were earnest and anxious like himself, with their whole thoughts directed to the success of the magnanimous struggle in which they were engaged.

So, too, the armies were contrasted. The British troops, many of them, perchance, slightly metamorphosed from vagabonds into soldiers, all mere men of the sword, were well clad, well housed, and surrounded by all the conveniences of a thoroughly appointed army with a "rebel country" to forage. The American troops for the most part were mere yeomanry, taken from their rural homes; ill sheltered, ill clad, ill fed, and ill paid, with nothing to reconcile them to their hardships but love for the soil they were defending, and the inspiring thought that it was *their country*. Washington, with paternal care, endeavor-

* Notes of the Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, MS.

ored to protect them from the depraving influences of the camp. "Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much as possible in your brigade," writes he in a circular to his brigadier-generals; "and, as a chaplain is allowed to each regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship. Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden, as being the foundation of evil, and the cause of many a brave and gallant officer's ruin."

CHAPTER XVII.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.—CASE OF COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN.—OF GENERAL LEE.—CORRESPONDENCE OF WASHINGTON WITH SIR WILLIAM HOWE ABOUT EXCHANGES OF PRISONERS.—REFEREES APPOINTED.—LETTERS OF LEE FROM NEW YORK.—CASE OF COLONEL CAMPBELL.—WASHINGTON'S ADVICE TO CONGRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF RETALIATION.—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD HOWE ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.—THE HORRORS OF THE JERSEY PRISON-SHIP AND THE SUGAR-HOUSE.

A CARTEL for the exchange of prisoners had been a subject of negotiation previous to the affair of Trenton, without being adjusted. The British commanders were slow to recognize the claims to equality of those they considered rebels; Washington was tenacious in holding them up as patriots ennobled by their cause.

Among the cases which came up for attention was that of Ethan Allen, the brave but eccentric captor of Ticonderoga. His daring attempts in the "path of renown" had cost him a world of hardships. Thrown into irons as a felon, threatened with a halter, carried to England to be tried for treason, confined in Pendennis Castle, retransported to Halifax, and now a prisoner in New York. "I have suffered everything short of death," writes he to the Assembly of his native State, Connecticut. He had, however, recovered health and suppleness of limb, and with them all his swelling spirit and swelling rhetoric. "I am fired," writes he, "with adequate indignation to revenge both my own and my country's wrongs. I am experimentally certain I have fortitude sufficient to face the invaders of America in the place of danger, spread with all the horrors of war." And he concludes with one of his magniloquent, but really sincere expressions of patriotism: "Provided you can

hit upon some measure to procure my liberty, I will appropriate my remaining days, and freely hazard my life in the service of the colony, and maintaining the American Empire. I thought to have enrolled my name in the list of illustrious American heroes, but was nipped in the bud !”

Honest Ethan Allen ! his name will ever stand enrolled on that list ; not illustrious, perhaps, but eminently popular.

His appeal to his native State had produced an appeal to Congress, and Washington had been instructed, considering his long imprisonment, to urge his exchange. This had scarce been urged, when tidings of the capture of General Lee presented a case of still greater importance to be provided for. “ I feel much for his misfortune,” writes Washington, “ and am sensible that in his captivity our country has lost a warm friend and an able officer.” By direction of Congress, he had sent in a flag to inquire about Lee’s treatment, and to convey him a sum of money. This was just previous to the second crossing of the Delaware.

Lee was now reported to be in rigorous confinement in New York, and treated with harshness and indignity. The British professed to consider him a deserter, he having been a lieutenant-colonel in their service, although he alleged that he had resigned his commission before joining the American army. Two letters which he addressed to General Howe, were returned to him unopened, inclosed in a cover directed to *Lieutenant-colonel Lee*.

On the 13th of January, Washington addressed the following letter to Sir William Howe. “ I am directed by Congress to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers taken at Trenton for Major-general Lee ; or if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, upon good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service, as his resignation has never been accepted, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves, but I must give you warning that Major-general Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit upon his life and liberty, will be severely retaliated upon the lives and liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies in our hands.”

In this letter he likewise adverted to the treatment of American prisoners in New York; several who had recently been released, having given the most shocking account of the barbarities they had experienced, "which their miserable, emaciated countenances confirmed."—"I would beg," added he, "that some certain rule of conduct towards prisoners may be settled; and, if you are determined to make captivity as distressing as possible, let me know it, that we may be upon equal terms, for your conduct shall regulate mine."

Sir William, in reply, proposed to send an officer of rank to Washington, to confer upon a mode of exchange and subsistence of prisoners. "This expedient," observes he, "appearing to me effectual for settling all differences, will, I hope, be the means of preventing a repetition of the improper terms in which your letter is expressed and founded on the grossest misrepresentations. I shall not make any further comment upon it, than to assure you, that your threats of retaliating upon the innocent such punishment as may be decreed in the circumstances of Mr. Lee by the laws of his country, will not divert me from my duty in any respect; at the same time, you may rest satisfied that the proceedings against him will not be precipitated; and I trust that, in this, or in any other event in the course of my command, you will not have just cause to accuse me of inhumanity, prejudice, or passion."

Sir William, in truth, was greatly perplexed with respect to Lee, and had written to England to Lord George Germaine for instructions in the case. "General Lee," writes he, "being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner; but I do not bring him to trial, as a doubt has arisen, whether, by a public resignation of his half-pay prior to his entry into the rebel army, he was amenable to the military law as a deserter."

The proposal of Sir William, that all disputed points relative to the exchange and subsistence of prisoners should be adjusted by referees, led to the appointment of two officers for the purpose; Colonel Walcott, by General Howe, and Colonel Harrison, "the old secretary," by Washington. In the contemplated exchanges was that of one of the Hessian field-officers for Colonel Ethan Allen.

The haughty spirit of Lee had experienced a severe humiliation in the late catastrophe; his pungent and caustic humor is at an end. In a letter addressed shortly afterwards to Washington, and inclosing one to Congress which Lord and General Howe had permitted him to send, he writes, "as the contents are of the last importance to me, and perhaps not less so to the

community, I most earnestly entreat, my dear general, that you will despatch it immediately, and order the Congress to be as expeditious as possible."

The letter contained a request that two or three gentlemen might be sent immediately to New York, to whom he would communicate what he conceived to be of the greatest importance. "If my own interests were alone at stake," writes he, "I flatter myself that the Congress would not hesitate a single instant in acquiescing in my request; but this is far from the case; the interests of the public are equally concerned. . . . Lord and General Howe will grant a safe conduct to the gentlemen deputed."

The letter having been read in Congress, Washington was directed to inform General Lee that they were pursuing and would continue to pursue every means in their power to provide for his personal safety, and to obtain his liberty; but that they considered it improper to send any of their body to communicate with him, and could not perceive how it would tend to his advantage or the interest of the public.

Lee repeated his request, but with no better success. He felt this refusal deeply; as a brief, sad note to Washington indicates.

"It is a most unfortunate circumstance for myself, and I think not less so for the public, that Congress have not thought proper to comply with my request. It could not possibly have been attended with any ill consequences, and might with good ones. At least it was an indulgence which I thought my situation entitled me to. But I am unfortunate in everything, and this stroke is the severest I have yet experienced. God send you a different fate. Adieu, my dear general.

"Yours most truly and affectionately,

CHARLES LEE."

How different from the humorous, satirical, self-confident tone of his former letters. Yet Lee's actual treatment was not so harsh as had been represented. He was in close confinement, it is true; but three rooms had been fitted up for his reception in the Old City Hall of New York, having nothing of the look of a prison excepting that they were secured by bolts and bars.

Congress, in the meantime, had resorted to their threatened measure of retaliation. On the 20th of February, they had resolved that the Board of War be directed immediately to order the five Hessian field-officers and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell

into safe and close custody, "it being the unalterable resolution of Congress to retaliate on them the same punishment as may be inflicted on the person of General Lee."

The Colonel Campbell here mentioned had commanded one of General Fraser's battalions of Highlanders, and had been captured on board of a transport in Nantasket road, in the preceding summer. He was a member of Parliament, and a gentleman of fortune. Retaliation was carried to excess in regard to him, for he was thrown into the common jail at Concord in Massachusetts.

From his prison he made an appeal to Washington, which at once touched his quick sense of justice. He immediately wrote to the council of Massachusetts Bay quoting the words of the resolution of Congress. "By this you will observe," adds he, "that *exactly the same treatment* is to be shown to Colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, that General Howe shows to General Lee, and as he is only confined to a commodious house with genteel accommodations, we have no right or reason to be more severe on Colonel Campbell, who I would wish should upon the receipt of this be removed from his present situation, and be put into a house where he may live comfortably."

In a letter to the President of Congress on the following day, he gives his moderating counsels on the whole subject of retaliation. "Though I sincerely commiserate," writes he, "the misfortunes of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that these resolutions will not have the desired effect, are founded on impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature."

"The balance of prisoners is greatly against us, and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us, in their possession, that we impose on theirs in our power? Why should we suppose them to possess more humanity than we have ourselves? Or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave, unfortunate man, involve many more in the same calamities? . . . Suppose," continues he, "the treatment prescribed for the Hessians should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice and the grossest misrepresentations, I mean an opinion of our enmity towards them, and of the cruel treatment they experience, when they

fall into our hands, a prejudice which we on our part have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and to root out by every act of lenity and of kindness?"

"Many more objections," added he, "might be subjoined, were they material. I shall only observe, that the present state of the army, if it deserves that name, will not authorize the language of retaliation, or the style of menace. This will be conceded by all who know that the whole of our force is weak and trifling, and composed of militia (very few regular troops excepted) whose service is on the eve of expiring."

In a letter to Mr. Robert Morris also, he writes: "I wish, with all my heart, that Congress had gratified General Lee in his request. If not too late I wish they would do it still. I can see no possible evil that can result from it; some good, I think, might. The request to see a gentleman or two came from the *general*, not from the commissioners; there could have been no harm, therefore, in hearing what *he* had to say on *any* subject, especially as he had declared that his own personal interest was deeply concerned. The resolve to put in close confinement Lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, in order to retaliate upon them General Lee's punishment, is, in my opinion, injurious in every point of view, and must have been entered into without due attention to the consequences. . . . If the resolve of Congress respecting General Lee strikes you in the same point of view it has done me, I could wish you would signify as much to that body, as I really think it fraught with every evil."

Washington was not always successful in instilling his wise moderation into public councils. Congress adhered to their vindictive policy, merely directing that no other hardships should be inflicted on the captive officers, than such confinement as was necessary to carry their resolve into effect. As to their refusal to grant the request of Lee, Robert Morris surmised they were fearful of the injurious effect that might be produced in the court of France, should it be reported that members of Congress visited General Lee, by permission of the British commissioners. There were other circumstances beside the treatment of General Lee, to produce this indignant sensibility on the part of Congress. Accounts were rife at this juncture, of the cruelties and indignities almost invariably experienced by American prisoners at New York; and an active correspondence on the subject was going on between Washington and the British commanders, at the same time with that regarding General Lee.

The captive Americans who had been in the naval service

were said to be confined, officers and men, in prison-ships, which from their loathsome condition, and the horrors and sufferings of all kinds experienced on board of them, had acquired the appellation of *floating hells*. Those who had been in the land service, were crowded into jails and dungeons like the vilest malefactors; and were represented as pining in cold, in filth, in hunger and nakedness.

“Our poor devoted soldiers,” writes an eye-witness, “were scantily supplied with provisions of bad quality, wretchedly clothed, and destitute of sufficient fuel, if indeed they had any. Disease was the inevitable consequence, and their prisons soon became hospitals. A fatal malady was generated, and the mortality, to every heart not steeled by the spirit of party, was truly deplorable.”* According to popular account, the prisoners confined on shipboard, and on shore, were perishing by hundreds.

A statement made by Captain Gamble, recently confined on board of a prison-ship, had especially roused the ire of Congress, and by their directions had produced a letter from Washington to Lord Howe. “I am sorry,” writes he, “that I am under the disagreeable necessity of troubling your lordship with a letter, almost wholly on the subject of the cruel treatment which our officers and men in the naval department, who are unhappy enough to fall into your hands, receive on board the prison-ships in the harbor of New York.” After specifying the case of Captain Gamble, and adding a few particulars, he proceeds: “From the opinion, I have ever been taught to entertain of your lordship’s humanity, I will not suppose that you are privy to proceedings of so cruel and unjustifiable a nature; and I hope, that, upon making the proper inquiry, you will have the matter so regulated, that the unhappy persons whose lot is captivity, may not in future have the miseries of cold, disease, and famine, added to their other misfortunes. You may call us rebels, and say that we deserve no better treatment; but remember, my lord, that, supposing us rebels, we still have feelings as keen and sensible as loyalists, and will, if forced to it, most assuredly retaliate upon those upon whom we look as the unjust invaders of our rights, liberties, and properties. I should not have said thus much, but my injured countrymen have long called upon me to endeavor to obtain a redress of their grievances, and I should think myself as culpable as those who inflict such severities upon them, were I to continue silent,” etc.

Lord Howe, in reply (January 17), expressed himself surprised at the matter and language of Washington’s letter, “so

* Graydon’s *Memoirs*, p. 232.

different from the liberal vein of sentiment he had been habituated to expect on every occasion of personal intercourse or correspondence with him." He was surprised, too that "the idle and unnatural report" of Captain Gamble, respecting the dead and dying, and the neglect of precautions against infection, should meet with any credit. "Attention to preserve the lives of these men," writes he, "whom we esteem the misled subjects of the king, is a duty as binding on us, where we are able from circumstances to execute it with effect, as any you can plead for the interest you profess in their welfare."

He denied that prisoners were ill treated in his particular department (the naval). They had been allowed the general liberty of the prison-ship, until a successful attempt of some to escape, had rendered it necessary to restrain the rest within such limits as left the commanding parts of the ship in possession of the guard. They had the same provisions in quality and quantity that were furnished to the seamen of his own ship. The want of cleanliness was the result of their own indolence and neglect. In regard to health, they had the constant attendance of an American surgeon, a fellow-prisoner; who was furnished with medicines from the king's stores; and the visits of the physician of the fleet.

"As I abhor every imputation of wanton cruelty in multiplying the miseries of the wretched," observes his lordship, "or of treating them with needless severity. I have taken the trouble to state these several facts."

In regard to the hint at retaliation, he leaves it to Washington to act therein as he should think fit; but adds he grandly, "the innocent at my disposal will not have any severities to apprehend from me on that account."

We have quoted this correspondence the more freely, because it is on a subject deeply worn into the American mind; and about which we have heard too many particulars, from childhood upwards, from persons of unquestionable veracity, who suffered in the cause, to permit us to doubt about the fact. The *Jersey Prison-ship* is proverbial in our revolutionary history; and the bones of the unfortunate patriots who perished on board, form a monument on the Long Island shore. The horrors of the *Sugar-house* converted into a prison, are traditional in New York; and the brutal tyranny of Cunningham, the provost-marshal, over men of worth confined in the common jail, for the sin of patriotism, has been handed down from generation to generation.

That Lord Howe and Sir Willam were ignorant of the extent of these atrocities we really believe, but it was their

duty to be well informed. War is, at best, a cruel trade, that habituates those who follow it to regard the sufferings of others with indifference. There is not a doubt, too, that a feeling of contumely deprived the patriot prisoners of all sympathy in the early stages of the Revolution. They were regarded as criminals rather than captives. The stigma of *rebels* seemed to take from them all the indulgences, scanty and miserable as they are, usually granted to prisoners of war. The British officers looked down with haughty contempt upon the American officers, who had fallen into their hands. The British soldiery treated them with insolent scurrility. It seemed as if the very ties of consanguinity rendered their hostility more intolerant, for it was observed that American prisoners were better treated by the Hessians than by the British. It was not until our countrymen had made themselves formidable by their successes that they were treated, when prisoners, with common decency and humanity.

The difficulties arising out of the case of General Lee interrupted the operations with regard to the exchange of prisoners; and gallant men, on both sides, suffered prolonged detention in consequence; and among the number the brave, but ill-starred Ethan Allen.

Lee, in the meantime, remained in confinement, until directions with regard to him should be received from government. Events, however, had diminished his importance in the eyes of the enemy; he was no longer considered the American palladium. "As the capture of the Hessians and the manœuvres against the British took place after the surprise of General Lee," observes a London writer of the day, "we find that he is not the only efficient officer in the American service."*

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii. 1244.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXERTIONS TO FORM A NEW ARMY.—CALLS ON THE DIFFERENT STATES.—INSUFFICIENCY OF THE MILITIA.—WASHINGTON'S CARE FOR THE YEOMANRY.—DANGERS IN THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT.—WINTER ATTACK ON TICONDEROGA APPREHENDED.—EXERTIONS TO REINFORCE SCHUYLER.—PRECAARIOUS STATE OF WASHINGTON'S ARMY.—CONJECTURES AS TO THE DESIGNS OF THE ENEMY.—EXPEDITION OF THE BRITISH AGAINST PEEKSKILL.

THE early part of the year brought the annual embarrassments caused by short enlistments. The brief terms of service for which the continental soldiery had enlisted, a few months perhaps, at most a year, were expiring; and the men glad to be released from camp duty, were hastening to their rustic homes. Militia had to be the dependence until a new army could be raised and organized; and Washington called on the Council of Safety of Pennsylvania, speedily to furnish temporary reinforcements of the kind.

All his officers that could be spared were ordered away, some to recruit, some to collect the scattered men of the different regiments, who were dispersed, he said, almost over the continent. General Knox was sent off to Massachusetts to expedite the raising of a battalion of artillery. Different States were urged to levy and equip their quotas for the continental army. "Nothing but the united efforts of every State in America," writes he, "can save us from disgrace, and probably from ruin."

Rhode Island is reproached with raising troops for home service before furnishing its supply to the general army. "If each State," writes he, "were to prepare for its own defense independent of each other, they would all be conquered, one by one. *Our success must depend on a firm union and a strict adherence to the general plan.*" *

He deplores the fluctuating state of the army while depending on militia; full one day, almost disbanded the next. "I am much afraid that the enemy, one day or other, taking advantage of one of these temporary weaknesses, will make themselves masters of our magazines of stores, arms, and artillery.

* Letter to Governor Cooke. Sparks, iv. 285.

The militia, too, on being dismissed, were generally suffered by their officers to carry home with them the arms with which they had been furnished, so that the armory was in a manner scattered over all the world, and forever lost to the public.

Then an earnest word is spoken by him in behalf of the yeomanry, whose welfare always lay near his heart. "You must be fully sensible," writes he, "of the hardships imposed upon individuals, and how detrimental it must be to the public to have farmers and tradesmen frequently called out of the field as militia men, whereby a total stop is put to arts and agriculture, without which we cannot long subsist."

While thus anxiously exerting himself to strengthen his own precarious army, the security of the Northern department was urged upon his attention. Schuyler represented it as in need of reinforcements and supplies of all kinds. He apprehended that Carleton might make an attack upon Ticonderoga, as soon as he could cross Lake Champlain on the ice; that important fortress was under the command of a brave officer, Colonel Anthony Wayne, but its garrison had dwindled down to six or seven hundred men, chiefly New England militia. In the present destitute situation of his department as to troops, Schuyler feared that Carleton might not only succeed in an attempt on Ticonderoga, but might push his way to Albany.

He had written in vain, he said, to the Convention of New York, and to the Eastern States, for reinforcements, and he entreated Washington to aid him with his influence. He wished to have his army composed of troops from as many different States as possible; the Southern people having a greater spirit of discipline and subordination, might, he thought, introduce it among the Eastern people.

He wished also for the assistance of a general officer or two in his department. "I am alone," writes he, "distracted with a variety of cares, and no one to take part of the burden." *

Although Washington considered a winter attack of the kind specified by Schuyler too difficult and dangerous to be very probable, he urged reinforcements from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, whence they could be furnished most speedily. Massachusetts, in fact, had already determined to send four regiments to Schuyler's aid as soon as possible.

Washington disapproved of a mixture of troops in the present critical juncture, knowing, he said, "the difficulty of maintaining harmony among men from different States, and bringing them to lay aside all attachments and distinctions of a local and provincial nature, and *consider themselves the same*

* Schuyler's Letter Book, MS.

*people, engaged in the same noble struggle, and having one general interest to defend.”**

The quota of Massachusetts, under the present arrangement of the army, was fifteen regiments; and Washington ordered General Heath, who was in Massachusetts, to forward them to Ticonderoga as fast as they could be raised.†

Notwithstanding all Washington's exertions in behalf of the army under his immediate command, it continued to be deplorably in want of reinforcements, and it was necessary to maintain the utmost vigilance at all his posts to prevent his camp from being surprised. The operation of the enemy might be delayed by the bad condition of the roads, and the want of horses to move their artillery, but he anticipated an attack as soon as the roads were passable, and apprehended a disastrous result unless speedily reinforced.

“The enemy,” writes he, “must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested, and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the fact to paper, lest this letter should fall into other hands than those for which it is intended.” And again: “It is not in my power to make Congress fully sensible of the real situation of our affairs, and that it is with difficulty I can keep the life and soul of the army together. In a word, they are at a distance; they think it is but to say *presto, begone*, and everything is done; they seem not to have any conception of the difficulty and perplexity of those who have to execute.”

The designs of the enemy being mere matter of conjecture, measures varied accordingly. As the season advanced, Washington was led to believe that Philadelphia would be their first object at the opening of the campaign, and that they would bring round all their troops from Canada by water to aid in the enterprise. Under this persuasion he wrote to General Heath, ordering him to send eight of the Massachusetts battalions to Peekskill instead of Ticonderoga, and he explained his reasons for so doing in a letter to Schuyler. “At Peekskill,” he observed, “they would be well placed to give support to any of the Eastern or Middle States; or to oppose the enemy, should they design to penetrate the country up the Hudson; or to cover New England, should they invade it. Should they move westward, the Eastern and Southern troops could easily form a junction, and this, besides, would oblige the enemy to leave a much stronger garrison at New York. Even should the enemy pursue their first plan of an invasion from Canada, the troops

* Ibid.

† Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, iv. 361, note.

at Peekskill would not be badly placed to reinforce Ticonderoga, and cover the country around Albany." "I am very sure," concludes he, "the operations of this army will in a great degree govern the motions of that in Canada. *If this is held at bay, curbed and confined, the Northern army will not dare attempt to penetrate.*" The last sentence will be found to contain the policy which governed Washington's personal movements throughout the campaign.

On the 18th of March he despatched General Greene to Philadelphia, to lay before Congress such matters as he could not venture to communicate by letter. "He is an able and good officer," writes he, "who has my entire confidence, and is intimately acquainted with my ideas."

Greene had scarce departed when the enemy began to give signs of life. The delay in the arrival of artillery, more than his natural indolence, had kept General Howe from formally taking the field; he now made preparations for the next campaign by detaching troops to destroy the American deposits of military stores. One of the chief of these was at Peekskill, the very place where Washington had directed Heath to send troops from Massachusetts; and which he thought of making a central point of assemblage. Howe terms it "the port of that rough and mountainous tract called the Manor of Courtlandt." Brigadier-general McDougall had the command of it in the absence of General Heath, but his force did not exceed two hundred and fifty men.

As soon as the Hudson was clear of ice, a squadron of vessels of war and transports, with five hundred troops under Colonel Bird, ascended the river. McDougall had intelligence of the intended attack, and while the ships were making their way across the Tappan Sea and Haverstraw Bay, exerted himself to remove as much as possible of the provisions and stores to Forts Montgomery and Constitution in the Highlands. On the morning of the 23d, the whole squadron came to anchor in Peekskill Bay; and five hundred men landed in Lent's Cove, on the south side of the bay, whence they pushed forward with four light field-pieces drawn by sailors. On their approach, McDougall set fire to the barracks and principal storehouses, and retreated about two miles to a strong post commanding the entrance to the Highlands, and the road to Continental Village, the place of the deposits. It was the post which had been noted by Washington in the preceding year, where a small force could make a stand, and hurl down masses of rock on their assailants. Hence McDougall sent an express to Lieutenant-colonel Marinus Willet, who had charge of Fort Constitution, to hasten to his assistance.

The British, finding the wharf in flames where they had intended to embark their spoils, completed the conflagration, beside destroying several small craft laden with provisions. They kept possession of the place until the following day, when a scouting party, which had advanced towards the entrance of the Highlands, was encountered by Colonel Marinus Willit with a detachment from Fort Constitution, and driven back to the main body after a sharp skirmish, in which nine of the marauders were killed. Four more were slain on the banks of Canopus Creek as they were setting fire to some boats. The enemy were disappointed in the hope of carrying off a great deal of booty, and finding the country around was getting under arms, they contented themselves with the mischief they had done, and reëmbarked in the evening by moonlight, when the whole squadron swept down the Hudson.

CHAPTER XIX.

SCHUYLER'S AFFAIRS IN THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT.—MISUNDERSTANDINGS WITH CONGRESS.—GIVES OFFENSE BY A REPROACHFUL LETTER.—OFFICE OF ADJUTANT-GENERAL OFFERED TO GATES.—DECLINED BY HIM.—SCHUYLER REPRIMANDED BY CONGRESS FOR HIS REPROACHFUL LETTER.—GATES APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND AT TICONDEROGA.—SCHUYLER CONSIDERS HIMSELF VIRTUALLY SUSPENDED.—TAKES HIS SEAT AS A DELEGATE TO CONGRESS, AND CLAIMS A COURT OF INQUIRY.—HAS COMMAND AT PHILADELPHIA.

WE have now to enter upon a tissue of circumstances connected with the Northern department, which will be found materially to influence the course of affairs in that quarter throughout the current year, and ultimately to be fruitful of annoyance to Washington himself. To make these more clear to the reader, it is necessary to revert to events in the preceding year.

The question of command between Schuyler and Gates, when settled as we have shown by Congress, had caused no interruption to the harmony of intercourse between these generals.

Schuyler directed the affairs of the department with energy and activity from his head-quarters at Albany, where they had been fixed by Congress, while Gates, subordinate to him, commanded the post of Ticonderoga.

The disappointment of an independent command, however,

still rankled in the mind of the latter, and was kept alive by the officious suggestions of meddling friends. In the course of the autumn, his hopes in this respect revived. Schuyler was again disgusted with the service. In the discharge of his various and harassing duties, he had been annoyed by sectional jealousies and ill will. His motives and measures had been maligned. The failures in Canada had been attributed to him, and he had repeatedly entreated Congress to order an inquiry into the many charges made against him, "that he might not any longer be insulted."

"I assure you," writes he to Gates, on the 25th of August, "that I am so sincerely tired of abuse, that I will let my enemies arrive at the completion of their wishes by retiring, as soon as I shall have been tried; and attempt to serve my injured country in some other way, where envy and detraction will have no temptation to follow me."

On the 14th of September, he actually offered his resignation of his commission as major-general, and of every other office and appointment; still claiming a court of inquiry on his conduct, and expressing his determination to fulfill the duties of a good citizen, and promote the weal of his native country, but in some other capacity. "I trust," writes he, "that my successor, whoever he may be, will find that matters are as prosperously arranged in this department as the nature of the service will admit. I shall most readily give him any information and assistance in my power."

He immediately wrote to General Gates, apprising him of his having sent in his resignation. "It is much to be lamented," writes he, "that calumny is so much cherished in this unhappy country, and that so few of the servants of the public escape the malevolence of a set of insidious miscreants. It has driven me to the necessity of resigning."

As the command of the department, should his resignation be accepted, would of course devolve on Gates, he assures him he will render every assistance in his power to any officer whom Gates might appoint to command in Albany.

All his letters to Gates, while they were thus in relation to the department, had been kind and courteous; beginning with, "My dear General," and ending with "adieu" and "every friendly wish." Schuyler was a warm-hearted man, and his expressions were probably sincere.

The hopes of Gates, inspired by this proffered resignation, were doomed to be again overclouded. Schuyler was informed by President Hancock, "that Congress, during the present state of affairs, could not consent to accept of his resignation: but

requested that he would continue in the command he held, and be assured that the aspersions thrown out by his enemies against his character, had no influence upon the minds of the members of that House; and that more effectually to put calumny to silence, they would at an early day appoint a committee to inquire fully into his conduct, which they trusted would establish his reputation in the opinion of all good men."

Schuyler received the resolve of Congress with grim acquiescence, but showed in his reply that he was but half soothed. "At this very critical juncture," writes he, October 16, "I shall waive those remarks which in justice to myself, I must make at a future day. The calumny of my enemies has arisen to its height. Their malice is incapable of heightening the injury. . . . In the alarming situation of our affairs, I shall continue to act some time longer, but Congress must prepare to put the care of this department into other hands. I shall be able to render my country better services in another line: less exposed to a repetition of the injuries I have sustained."

He had remained at his post, therefore, discharging the various duties of his department with his usual zeal and activity; and Gates, at the end of the campaign, had repaired, as we have shown, to the vicinity of Congress, to attend the fluctuation of events.

Circumstances in the course of the winter had put the worthy Schuyler again on points of punctilio with Congress. Among some letters intercepted by the enemy and retaken by the Americans, was one from Colonel Joseph Trumbull, the commissary-general, insinuating that General Schuyler had secreted or suppressed a commission sent for his brother, Colonel John Trumbull, as deputy adjutant-general.* The purport of the letter was reported to Schuyler. He spurned at the insinuation. "If it be true that he has asserted such a thing," writes he to the president, "I shall expect from Congress that justice which is due to me."

Three weeks later he inclosed to the president a copy of Trumbull's letter. "I hope," writes he, "Congress will not entertain the least idea that I can tamely submit to such injurious treatment. I expect they will immediately do what is incumbent on them on the occasion. Until Mr. Trumbull and I are upon a footing, I cannot do what the laws of honor and a regard to my own reputation render indispensably necessary. Congress can put us on a par by dismissing one or the other from the service."

* The reader may recollect that it was Commissary-general Trumbull who wrote the letter to Gates calculated to inflame his jealousy against Schuyler, when the question of command had risen between them. (See vol. i. ch. 28.)

Congress failed to comply with the general's request. They added also to his chagrin by dismissing from the service an army physician, in whose appointment he had particularly interested himself.

Schuyler was a proud-spirited man, and, at times, somewhat irascible. In a letter to Congress on the 8th of February, he observed: "As Dr. Stringer had my recommendation to the office he has sustained, perhaps it was a compliment due to me that I should have been advised of the reason of his dismissal."

And again: "I was in hopes some notice would have been taken of the odious suspicion contained in Mr. Commissary Trumbull's intercepted letter. I really feel myself deeply chagrined on the occasion. I am incapable of the meanness he suspects me of, and I confidently expected that Congress would have done me that justice which it was in their power to give, and which I humbly conceive they ought to have done."

This letter gave great umbrage to Congress, but no immediate answer was made to it.

About this time the office of adjutant-general, which had remained vacant ever since the resignation of Colonel Reed, to the great detriment of the service, especially now when a new army was to be formed, was offered to General Gates, who had formerly filled it with ability; and President Hancock informed him, by letter, of the earnest desire of Congress that he should resume it, retaining his present rank and pay.

Gates almost resented the proposal. "Unless the commander-in-chief earnestly makes the same request with your Excellency," replies he, "all my endeavors as adjutant-general would be vain and fruitless. I had, last year, the honor to command in the second post in America; and had the good fortune to prevent the enemy from making their so much wished-for junction with General Howe. After this, to be expected to dwindle again to the adjutant-general, requires more philosophy on my part, and something more than words on yours." *

He wrote to Washington to the same effect, but declared that, should it be his Excellency's wish, he would resume the office with alacrity.

Washington promptly replied that he had often wished it in secret, though he had never even hinted at it, supposing Gates might have scruples on the subject. "You cannot conceive the pleasure I feel," adds he, "when you tell me that, if it is my desire that you should resume your former office, you will with cheerfulness and alacrity proceed to Morristown." He thanks him for this mark of attention to his wishes: as-

* *Gates' Papers*, N. Y. H. Lib.

sure him that he looks upon his resumption of the office as the only means of giving form and regularity to the new army; and will be glad to receive a line from him mentioning the time he would leave Philadelphia.

He received no such line. Gates had a higher object in view. A letter from Schuyler to Congress, had informed that body that he should set out for Philadelphia about the 21st of March, and should immediately on his arrival require the promised inquiry into his conduct. Gates, of course, was acquainted with this circumstance. He knew Schuyler had given offense to Congress; he knew that he had been offended on his own part, and had repeatedly talked of resigning. He had active friends in Congress ready to push his interests. On the 12th of March his letter to President Hancock about the proffered adjutancy was read, and ordered to be taken into consideration on the following day.

On the 13th, a committee of five was appointed to confer with him upon the general state of affairs.

On the 15th, the letter of General Schuyler of the 3d of February which had given such offense, was brought before the House, and it was resolved that his suggestion concerning the dismissal of Dr. Stringer, was highly derogatory to the honor of Congress, and that it was expected his letters in future would be written in a style suitable to the dignity of the representative body of these free and independent States, and to his own character as their officer. His expressions, too, respecting the intercepted letter, that he had expected Congress would have done him all the justice in their power, were pronounced, "to say the least, ill-advised and highly indecent."*

While Schuyler was thus in partial eclipse, the House proceeded to appoint a general officer for the Northern department, of which he had stated it to be in need.

On the 25th of March, Gates received the following note from President Hancock: "I have it in charge to direct that you repair to Ticonderoga immediately, and take command of the army stationed in that department.

Gates obeyed with alacrity. Again the vision of an independent command floated before his mind, and he was on his way to Albany, at the time that Schuyler, ignorant of this new arrangement, was journeying to Philadelphia. Gates was accompanied by Brigadier-general Fermois, a French officer, recently commissioned in the continental army. A rumor of his approach preceded him. "What are the terms on which Gates is coming on?" was asked in Albany. "Has Schuyler been

* Journals of Congress.

superseded, or is he to be so, or has he resigned?" For a time all was rumor and conjecture. A report reached his family that he was to be divested of all titles and rank other than that of Philip Schuyler, Esquire. They heard it with joy, knowing the carking cares and annoyances that had beset him in his command. His military friends deprecated it as a great loss to the service.*

When Gates arrived in Albany, Colonel Varick, Schuyler's secretary, waited on him with a message from Mrs. Schuyler, inviting him to take up his quarters at the general's house, which was in the vicinity. He declined, as the despatch of affairs required him to be continually in town; but took his breakfast with Mrs. Schuyler the next morning. He remained in Albany, unwilling to depart for Ticonderoga until there should be sufficient troops there to support him.

Schuyler arrived in Philadelphia in the second week in April, and found himself superseded in effect by General Gates in the Northern department. He inclosed to the committee of Albany the recent resolutions of Congress, passed before his arrival. "By these," writes he, "you will readily perceive that I shall not return a general. Under what influence it has been brought about, I am not at liberty now to mention. On my return to Albany, I shall give the committee the fullest information."†

Taking his seat in Congress as a delegate from New York, he demanded the promised investigation of his conduct during the time he had held a command in the army. It was his intention, when the scrutiny had taken place, to resign his commission, and retire from the service. On the 18th, a committee of inquiry was appointed, as at his request, composed of a member from each State.

In the meantime, as second major-general of the United States (Lee being the first), he held active command at Philadelphia, forming a camp on the western side of the Delaware, completing the works on Fort Island, throwing up works on Red Bank, and accelerating the despatch of troops and provisions to the commander-in-chief. During his sojourn at Philadelphia, also, he contributed essentially to reorganize the commissary department; digesting rules for its regulation, which were mainly adopted by Congress.

* Letter of Colonel Richard Varick. Schuyler's Letter Book.

† Schuyler's Letter Book.

CHAPTER XX.

FOREIGN OFFICERS CANDIDATES FOR SITUATIONS IN THE ARMY.
 —DIFFICULTIES IN ADJUSTING QUESTIONS OF RANK.—DUCOUDRAY.—CONWAY.—KOSCIUSZKO.—WASHINGTON'S GUARDS.
 —ARNOLD OMITTED IN THE ARMY PROMOTIONS.—WASHINGTON TAKES HIS PART.—BRITISH EXPEDITION AGAINST DANBURY.—DESTRUCTION OF AMERICAN STORES.—CONNECTICUT YEOMANRY IN ARMS.—SKIRMISH AT RIDGEFIELD.—DEATH OF GENERAL WOOSTER.—GALLANT SERVICES OF ARNOLD.—REWARDED BY CONGRESS.—EXPLOIT OF COLONEL MEIGS AT SAG HARBOR.

THE fame of the American struggle for independence was bringing foreign officers as candidates for admission into the patriot army, and causing great embarrassment to the commander-in-chief. "They seldom," writes Washington, "bring more than a commission and a passport; which we know may belong to a bad as well as a good officer. Their ignorance of our language, and their inability to recruit men, are insurmountable obstacles to their being engrafted in our continental battalions; for our officers, who have raised their men, and have served through the war upon pay that has not hitherto borne their expenses, would be disgusted if foreigners were put over their heads; and I assure you, few or none of these gentlemen look lower than field officers' commissions. . . . Some general mode of disposing of them must be adopted, for it is ungenerous to keep them in suspense, and a great charge to themselves; but I am at a loss to know how to point out this mode."

Congress determined that no foreign officers should receive commissions who were not well acquainted with the English language, and did not bring strong testimonials of their abilities. Still there was embarrassment. Some came with brevet commissions from the French government, and had been assured by Mr. Deane, American commissioner at Paris, that they would have the same rank in the American army. This would put them above American officers of merit and hard service, whose commissions were of more recent date. One Monsieur Ducoudray, on the strength of an agreement with Mr. Deane, expected to have the rank of major-general, and to be put at the head of the artillery. Washington deprecated the idea of intrusting

a department on which the very salvation of the army might depend, to a foreigner, who had no other tie to bind him to the interests of the country than honor; besides, he observed, it would endanger the loss to the service of General Knox, "a man of great military reading, sound judgment, and clear perceptions. He has conducted the affairs of that department with honor to himself and advantage to the public, and will resign if any one is put over him."

In fact, the report that Ducoudray was to be a major-general with a commission dated in the preceding year, caused a commotion among the American officers of that rank, but whose commissions were of later date. Congress eventually determined not to ratify the contract entered into between Mr. Deane and Monsieur Ducoudray, and resolved that the commissions of foreign officers received into the service, should bear date on the day of their being filled up by Washington.

Among the foreign candidates for appointments was one Colonel Conway, a native of Ireland, but who, according to his own account, had been thirty years in the service of France, and claimed to be a chevalier of the order of St. Louis, of which he wore the decoration. Mr. Dean had recommended him to Washington as an officer of merit, and had written to Congress that he considered him well qualified for the office of adjutant or brigadier-general, and that he had given him reason to hope for one or the other of these appointments. Colonel Conway pushed for that of brigadier-general. It had been conferred some time before by Congress on two French officers, De Fermois and Deborre, who, he had observed, had been inferior to him in the French service, and it would be mortifying now to hold rank below them.

"I cannot pretend," writes Washington to the president, "to speak of Colonel Conway's merits or abilities of my own knowledge. He appears to be a man of candor, and, if he has been in service as long as he says, I should suppose him infinitely better qualified to serve us than many who have been promoted, as he speaks our language."

Conway accordingly received the rank of brigadier-general, of which he subsequently proved himself unworthy. He was boastful and presumptuous, and became noted for his intrigues and for a despicable cabal against the commander-in-chief, which went by his name, and of which we shall have to speak hereafter.

A candidate of a different stamp had presented himself in the preceding year, the gallant, generous-spirited, Thaddeus Kosciuszko. He was a Pole, of an ancient and noble family of

Lithuania, and had been educated for the profession of arms at the military school at Warsaw, and subsequently in France. Disappointed in a love affair with a beautiful lady of rank with whom he had attempted to elope, he had emigrated to this country, and came provided with a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin to Washington.

"What do you seek here?" inquired the commander-in-chief.

"To fight for American independence."

"What can you do?"

"Try me."

Washington was pleased with the curt, yet comprehensive reply, and with his chivalrous air and spirit, and at once received him into his family as an aide-de-camp.* Congress shortly afterwards appointed him an engineer, with the rank of colonel. He proved a valuable officer throughout the Revolution, and won an honorable and lasting name in our country.

Among the regiments which had been formed in the spring, one had been named by its officers "The Congress' Own," and another "General Washington's Life Guards." A resolve of Congress promptly appeared, pronouncing those appellations improper, and ordering that they should be discontinued. Washington's own modesty had already administered a corrective. In a letter to the President of Congress, he declared that the regiments had been so named without his consent or privity. "As soon as I heard of it," writes he, "I wrote to several of the officers in terms of severe reprehension, and expressly charged them to suppress the distinction, adding that all the battalions were on the same footing, and all under the general name of Continental." No man was less desirous for all individual distinctions of the kind.

Somewhat later he really formed a company for his guard. Colonel Alexander Spotswood had the selection of the men, four from each regiment; and was charged to be extremely cautious, "because," writes Washington, "it is more than probable that, in the course of the campaign, my baggage, papers, and other matters of great public import, may be committed to the sole care of these men." That the company might look well, and be nearly of a size, none were to be over five feet ten, nor under five feet nine inches in stature, and to be sober, young, active, and well-made, of good character, and proud of appearing clean and soldier-like. As there would be a greater chance for fidelity among such as had family connections in the country, Spotswood was charged to send none but natives, and, if possible,

* *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. xv. p. 114.

men of some property. "I must insist," concludes Washington, "that, in making this choice, you give no intimation of my preference of natives, as I do not want to create any invidious distinction between them and the officers."*

Questions of rank among his generals, were, as we have repeatedly shown, perpetual sources of perplexity to Washington, and too often caused by what the sarcastic Lee termed "the stumblings of Congress;" such was the case at present. In recent army promotions, Congress had advanced Stirling, Mifflin, St. Clair, Stephen, and Lincoln, to the rank of major-general, while Arnold, their senior in service, and distinguished by so many brilliant exploits, was passed over and left to remain a brigadier.

Washington was surprised at not seeing his name on the list, but supposing it might have been omitted through mistake, he wrote to Arnold, who was at Providence in Rhode Island, advising him not to take any hasty step in consequence, but to allow time for reflection, promising his own endeavors to remedy any error that might have been made. He wrote also to Henry Lee in Congress, inquiring whether the omission was owing to accident or design. "Surely," said he, "a more active, a more spirited, and sensible officer, fills no department of your army. Not seeing him, then, in the list of major-generals, and no mention made of him, has given me uneasiness; as it is not presumed, being the oldest brigadier, that he will continue in service under such a slight."

Arnold was, in truth, deeply wounded by the omission. "I am greatly obliged to your Excellency," writes he to Washington, "for interesting yourself so much in respect to my appointment, which I have had no advice of, and know not by what means it was announced in the papers. Congress undoubtedly have a right of promoting those whom, from their abilities, and their long and arduous services, they esteem most deserving. Their promoting junior officers to the rank of major-generals, I view as a very civil way of requesting my resignation, as unqualified for the office I hold. My commission was conferred unsolicited, and received with pleasure only as a means of serving my country. With equal pleasure I resign it, when I can no longer serve my country with honor. The person who, void of the nice feelings of honor, will tamely condescend to give up his right, and retain a commission at the expense of his reputation, I hold as a disgrace to the army, and unworthy of the glorious cause in which we are engaged. . . . In justice, therefore, to my own character, and for the satisfaction of my

* Sparks. *Writings of Washington*, iv. 407.

friends, I must request a court of inquiry into my conduct ; and though I sensibly feel the ingratitude of my countrymen, yet every personal injury shall be buried in my zeal for the safety and happiness of my country, in whose cause I have repeatedly fought and bled, and am ready at all times to risk my life."

He subsequently intimated that he should avoid any hasty step, and should remain at his post until he could leave it without any damage to the public interest.

The principle upon which Congress had proceeded in their recent promotions was explained to Washington. The number of general officers promoted from each State was proportioned to the number of men furnished by it. Connecticut (Arnold's State) had already two major-generals, which was its full share. "I confess," writes Washington to Arnold, "this is a strange mode of reasoning ; but it may serve to show you that the promotion, which was due to your seniority, was not overlooked for want of merit in you."

"The point," observes he, "is of so delicate a nature, that I will not even undertake to advise. Your own feelings must be your guide. As no particular charge is alleged against you, I do not see upon what grounds you can demand a court of inquiry. Your determination not to quit your present command, while any danger to the public might ensue from your leaving it, deserves my thanks, and justly entitles you to the thanks of the country."

An opportunity occurred before long, for Arnold again to signalize himself.

The amount of stores destroyed at Peekskill had fallen far short of General Howe's expectations. Something more must be done to cripple the Americans before the opening of the campaign. Accordingly, another expedition was set on foot against a still larger deposit at Danbury, within the borders of Connecticut, and between twenty and thirty miles from Peekskill.

Ex-governor Tryon, recently commissioned major-general of provincials, conducted it, accompanied by Brigadier-general Agnew and Sir William Erskine. He had a mongrel force two thousand strong ; American, Irish, and British refugees from various parts of the continent ; and made his appearance on the Sound in the latter part of April, with a fleet of twenty-six sail, greatly to the disquiet of every assailable place along the coast. On the 25th, towards evening, he landed his troops on the beach at the foot of Canepo Hill, near the mouth of the Saugatuck River. The yeomanry of the neighborhood had assembled to resist them, but a few cannon-shot made them

give way, and the troops set off for Danbury, about twenty-three miles distant; galled at first by a scattering fire from behind a stone fence. They were in a patriotic neighborhood. General Silliman, of the Connecticut militia, who resided at Fairfield, a few miles distant, sent out expresses to rouse the country. It so happened that General Arnold was at New Haven, between twenty and thirty miles off, on his way to Philadelphia for the purpose of settling his accounts. At the alarm of a British inroad, he forgot his injuries and irritation, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by General Wooster, hastened to join General Silliman. As they spurred forward, every farm-house sent out its warrior, until upwards of a hundred were pressing on with them, full of the fighting spirit. Lieutenant Oswald, Arnold's secretary in the Canada campaign, who had led the forlorn hope in the attempt upon Quebec, was at this time at New Haven, enlisting men for Lamb's regiment of artillery. He, too, heard the note of alarm, and mustering his recruits, marched off with three field-pieces for the scene of action." *

In the meanwhile the British, marching all night with short haltings, reached Danbury about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. There were but fifty Continental soldiers and one hundred militia in the place. These retreated, as did most of the inhabitants, excepting such as remained to take care of the sick and aged. Four men, intoxicated, as it was said, fired, upon the troops from the windows of a large house. The soldiers rushed in, drove them into the cellar, set fire to the house, and left them to perish in the flames.

There was a great quantity of stores of all kinds in the village, and no vehicles to convey them to the ships. The work of destruction commenced. The soldiers made free with the liquors found in abundance; and throughout the greater part of the night there was revel, drunkenness, blasphemy, and devastation. Tryon, full of anxiety, and aware that the country was rising, ordered a retreat before daylight, setting fire to the magazines to complete the destruction of the stores. The flames spread to the other edifices, and almost the whole village was soon in a blaze. The extreme darkness of a rainy night made the conflagration more balefully apparent throughout the country.

While these scenes had been transacted at Danbury, the Connecticut yeomanry had been gathering. Fairfield and the adjacent counties had poured out their minute men. General Silliman had advanced at the head of five hundred. General

* *Life of Lamb*, p. 157.

Wooster and Arnold joined him with their chance followers, as did a few more militia. A heavy rain retarded their march; it was near midnight when they reached Bethel, within four miles of Danbury. Here they halted, to take a little repose and put their arms in order, rendered almost unserviceable by the rain. They were now about six hundred strong. Wooster took the command, as first major-general of the militia of the State. Though in the sixty-eighth year of his age, he was full of ardor, with almost youthful fire and daring. A plan was concerted to punish the enemy on their retreat; and the lurid light of Danbury in flames redoubled the provocation. At dawn of day, Wooster detached Arnold with four hundred men, to push across the country and take post at Ridgefield, by which the British must pass; while he with two hundred remained, to hang on and harass them in flank and rear.

The British began their retreat early in the morning, conducting it in regular style, with flanking parties, and a rear-guard well furnished with artillery. As soon as they had passed his position, Wooster attacked the rear-guard with great spirit and effect; there was sharp skirmishing until within two miles of Ridgefield, when, as the veteran was cheering on his men, who began to waver, a musket-ball brought him down from his horse, and finished his gallant career. On his fall his men retreated in disorder.

The delay which his attack had occasioned to the enemy, had given Arnold time to throw up a kind of breastwork or barricade across the road at the north end of Ridgefield, protected by a house on the right, and a high rocky bank on the left, where he took his stand with his little force now increased to about five hundred men. About eleven o'clock the enemy advanced in column, with artillery and flanking parties. They were kept at bay for a time, and received several volleys from the barricade, until it was outflanked and carried. Arnold ordered a retreat, and was bringing off the rear-guard, when his horse was shot under him, and came down upon his knees. Arnold remained seated in the saddle, with one foot entangled in the stirrups. A tory soldier seeing his plight, rushed towards him with fixed bayonet. He had just time to draw a pistol from the holster. "You're my prisoner," cried the tory. "Not yet," exclaimed Arnold, and shot him dead. Then extricating his foot from the stirrup, he threw himself into the thickets of a neighboring swamp, and escaped, unharmed by the bullets that whistled after him, and joined his retreating troops.

General Tryon intrenched for the night in Ridgefield, his troops having suffered greatly in their harassed retreat. The

next morning, after having set fire to four houses, he continued his march for the ships.

Colonel Huntingdon, of the Continental army, with the troops which had been stationed at Danbury, the scattered forces of Wooster which had joined him, and a number of militia, hung on the rear of the enemy as soon as they were in motion. Arnold was again in the field, with his rallied forces strengthened by Lieutenant-colonel Oswald with two companies of Lamb's artillery regiment and three field-pieces. With these he again posted himself on the enemy's route.

Difficulties and annoyances had multiplied upon the latter at every step. When they came in sight of the position where Arnold was waiting for them, they changed their route, wheeled to the left, and made for a ford of Saugatuck River. Arnold hastened to cross the bridge and take them in flank, but they were too quick for him. Colonel Lamb had now reached the scene of action, as had about two hundred volunteers. Leaving to Oswald the charge of the artillery, he put himself at the head of the volunteers, and led them up to Arnold's assistance.

The enemy, finding themselves hard pressed, pushed for Canepo Hill. They reached it in the evening, without a round of ammunition in their cartridge-boxes. As they were now within cannon-shot of their ships, the Americans ceased the pursuit. The British formed upon high ground, brought their artillery to the front, and sent off to the ships for reinforcements. Sir William Erskine landed a large body of marines and sailors, who drove the Americans back for some distance, and covered the embarkation of the troops. Colonel Lamb, while leading on his men gallantly to capture the British field-pieces, was wounded by a grape-shot, and Arnold, while cheering on the militia, had another horse shot under him. In the meantime, the harassed marauders effected their embarkation, and the fleet got under way.

In this inroad the enemy destroyed a considerable amount of military stores, and seventeen hundred tents prepared for the use of Washington's army in the ensuing campaign. The loss of General Wooster was deeply deplored. He survived the action long enough to be consoled in his dying moments at Danbury, by the presence of his wife and son, who hastened thither from New Haven. As to Arnold, his gallantry in this affair gained him fresh laurels, and Congress, to remedy their late error, promoted him to the rank of major-general. Still this promotion did not restore him to his proper position. He was at the bottom of the list of major-generals, with four officers above him, his juniors in service. Washington felt this injustice on the

part of Congress, and wrote about it to the president. "He has certainly discovered," said he, "in every instance where he has had an opportunity, much bravery, activity, and enterprise. But what will be done about his rank? He will not act, most probably, under those he commanded but a few weeks ago."

As an additional balm to Arnold's wounded pride, Congress a few days afterwards voted that a horse, properly caparisoned, should be presented to him in their name, as a token of their approbation of his gallant conduct in the late action, "in which he had one horse shot under him and another wounded." But after all he remained at the bottom of the list, and the wound still rankled in his bosom.

The destructive expeditions against the American depots of military stores, were retaliated in kind by Colonel Meigs, a spirited officer, who had accompanied Arnold in his expedition through the wilderness against Quebec, and had caught something of his love for hardy exploit. Having received intelligence that the British commissaries had collected a great amount of grain, forage, and other supplies at Sag Harbor, a small port in the deep bay which forks the east end of Long Island, he crossed the Sound on the 23d of May from Guilford in Connecticut, with about one hundred and seventy men in whaleboats conveyed by two armed sloops: landed on the island near Southhold; carried the boats a distance of fifteen miles across the north fork of the bay, launched them into the latter, crossed it, landed within four miles of Sag Harbor, and before daybreak carried the place, which was guarded by a company of foot. A furious fire of round and grape shot was opened upon the Americans from an armed schooner, anchored about one hundred and fifty yards from shore; and stout defense was made by the crews of a dozen brigs and sloops lying at the wharf to take in freight; but Meigs succeeded in burning these vessels, destroying everything on shore, and carrying off ninety prisoners; among whom were the officers of the company of foot, the commissaries and the captains of most of the small vessels. With these he and his party recrossed the bay, transported their boats again across the fork of land, launched them on the Sound, and got safe back to Guilford, having achieved all this, and traversed about ninety miles of land and water, in twenty-five hours. Washington was so highly pleased with the spirit and success of this enterprise, that he publicly returned thanks to Colonel Meigs and the officers and men engaged in it. It could not fail, he said, greatly to distress the enemy in the important and essential article of forage. But it was the moral effect of the enterprise which gave it the most value. It is difficult, at the

present day, sufficiently to appreciate the importance of partisan exploits of the kind, in the critical stage of the war of which we are treating. They cheered the spirit of the people, depressed by overshadowing dangers and severe privations, and kept alive the military spark that was to kindle into the future flame.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHUYLER ON THE POINT OF RESIGNING.—COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY REPORT IN HIS FAVOR.—HIS MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS PROVES SATISFACTORY.—DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT.—GATES MISTAKEN AS TO HIS POSITION.—HE PROMPTS HIS FRIENDS IN CONGRESS.—HIS PETULANT LETTER TO WASHINGTON.—DIGNIFIED REPLY OF THE LATTER.—POSITION OF GATES DEFINED.—SCHUYLER REINSTATED IN COMMAND OF THE DEPARTMENT.—GATES APPEARS ON THE FLOOR OF CONGRESS.—HIS PROCEEDINGS THERE.

THE time was at hand for the committee of inquiry on General Schuyler's conduct to make their report to Congress, and he awaited it with impatience. "I propose in a day or two to resign my commission," writes he to Washington on the 3d of May. "As soon as I have done it, I shall transmit to your Excellency my reasons for such a step."

Washington was grieved at receiving this intimation. He had ever found Schuyler a faithful coadjutor. He knew his peculiar fitness for the Northern department from his knowledge of the country and its people, his influence among its most important citizens, his experience in treating with the Indians, his fiery energy, his fertility in expedients, and his "sound military sense." But he knew also his sensitive nature, and the peculiar annoyances with which he had had to contend. On a former occasion he had prevented him from resigning, by an appeal to his patriotism; he no longer felt justified in interfering. "I am sorry," writes he, "that circumstances are such as to dispose you to a resignation; but you are the best judge of the line of conduct most reconcilable to your duty, both in a public and personal view; and your own feelings must determine you in a matter of so delicate and interesting a nature." *

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

Affairs, however, were taking a more favorable turn. The committee of inquiry made a report which placed the character of Schuyler higher than ever as an able and active commander, and a zealous and disinterested patriot.

He made a memorial to Congress explaining away or apologizing for the expressions in his letter of the 4th of February, which had given offense to the House. His memorial was satisfactory; and he was officiously informed that Congress now "entertained the same favorable sentiments concerning him, that they had entertained before that letter was received."

There were warm discussions in the House on the subject of the Northern department. Several of the most important of the New York delegates observed that General Gates misapprehended his position. He considered himself as holding the same command as that formerly held by General Schuyler. Such was not the intention of Congress in sending him to take command of the army at Ticonderoga. There had been a question between sending him to *that post*, or giving him the adjutancy general, and it had been decided for the former.

It would be nonsense, they observed, to give him command of the Northern department, and confine him to Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, where he could not have an extensive idea of the defense of the frontier of the Eastern States; but only of one spot, to which the enemy were not obliged to confine their operations, and, as it were, to knock their heads against a single rock. The affairs of the northeast, it was added, and of the State of New York in particular, were in a critical condition. Much disaffection prevailed, and great clashing of interests. There was but one man capable of keeping all united against the common enemy, and he stood on the books as commander-in-chief of the Middle, or, as it was sometimes called, the Northern department. His presence was absolutely necessary in his home quarters for their immediate succor, but if he returned, he would be a general, without an army or a military chest; and why was he thus disgraced?

The friends of Gates, on the other hand, who were chiefly delegates from New England, pronounced it an absurdity, that an officer holding such an important post as Ticonderoga, should be under the absolute orders of another one hundred miles distant, engaged in treaties with Indians, and busied in the duties of a provedore. The establishment of commands in departments was entirely wrong; there should be a commander-in-chief, and commanders of the different armies.

We gather these scanty particulars from a letter addressed to Gates by Mr. Lovell. The latter expresses himself with a

proper spirit. "I wish," writes he, "some course could be taken which would suit you both. It is plain all the Northern army cannot be intended for the single garrison of Ticonderoga. Who then has the distribution of the members? This must depend on one opinion, or there can be no decision in the defense of the Northern frontiers. It is an unhappy circumstance that such is the altercation at the opening of the campaign."

This letter produced an anxious reply: "Why," writes Gates, "when the argument in support of General Schuyler's command was imposed upon Congress, did not you or somebody say, 'the second post upon this continent next campaign will be at or near Peekskill. There General Schuyler ought to go and command; that will be the curb in the mouth of the New York Tories, and the enemy's army. He will then be near the convention and in the centre of the colony, have a military chest, and all the insignia of office.' This command in honor could not be refused, without owning there is something more alluring than command to General Schuyler, by fixing him at Albany. By urging this matter home you would have proved the man. He would have resigned all command, have accepted the government of New York, and been fixed to a station where he must do good, and which could not interfere with, or prevent any arrangement Congress have made, or may hereafter make. Unhappy State! That has but one man in it who can fix the wavering minds of its inhabitants to the side of freedom! How could you sit patiently, and, uncontradicted, suffer such impertinence to be crammed down your throats?"

"Why is it nonsense," pursues Gates, "to station the commanding general in the Northern department at Ticonderoga? Was it not the uniform practice of the royal army all last war? Nothing is more certain than that the enemy must first possess that single rock before they can penetrate the country. . . . It is foolish in the extreme, to believe the enemy this year can form any attack from the northward but by Ticonderoga. Where, then, ought the commanding general to be posted? Certainly at Ticonderoga. If General Schuyler is solely to possess all the power, all the intelligence, and that particular favorite, the military chest, and constantly reside at Albany, I cannot, with any peace of mind, serve at Ticonderoga."*

This letter was despatched by private hand to Philadelphia.

While Gates was in this mood, his aide-de-camp, Major Troup, reported an unsuccessful application to the commander-

* Letter to Jas. Lovell of Massachusetts's. *Gates's Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

in-chief for tents. In the petulance of the moment, Gates addressed the following letter to Washington: "Major Troup, upon being disappointed in procuring tents at Fishkill, acquaints me that he went to head-quarters to implore your Excellency's aid in that particular for the Northern army. He says your Excellency told him you should want every tent upon the continent for the armies to the southward, and that you did not see any occasion the Northern army could have for tents, for, being a fixed post, they might hut. Refusing this army what you have not in your power to bestow, is one thing," adds Gates, "but saying that this army has not the same necessities as the Southern armies, is another. I can assure your Excellency the service of the northward requires tents as much as any service I ever saw." *

However indignant Washington may have felt at the disrespectful tone of this letter, and the unwarrantable imputation of sectional partiality contained in it, he contented himself with a grave and measured rebuke. "Can you suppose," writes he, "if there had been an ample supply of tents for the whole army, that I should have hesitated one moment in complying with your demand? I told Major Troup that on account of our loss at Danbury there would be a scarcity of tents; that our army would be a moving one, and that consequently nothing but tents would serve our turn; and that, therefore, as there would be the greatest probability of your being stationary, you should endeavor to cover your troops with barracks and huts. Certainly this was not a refusal of tents, but a request that you should, in our contracted situation, make every shift to do without them, or at least with as few as possible.

"The Northern army is, and ever has been, as much the object of my care and attention as the one immediately under my command. . . . I will make particular inquiry of the quartermaster-general, concerning his prospect and expectation as to the article of tents and if, as I said before, there appears a sufficiency for the whole army, you shall most willingly have your share. But, if there is not, surely that army whose movement is uncertain, must give up its claims for the present to that which must inevitably take the field the moment the weather will admit, and must continue in it the whole campaign." †

Notwithstanding this reply, Gates persisted in imputing sectional partiality to the commander-in-chief, and sought to impart the same idea to Congress. "Either I am exceedingly

* *Gates's Papers.*

Washington's Writings, Sparks, iv. 427.

dull or unreasonably jealous," writes he to his correspondent Mr. Lovell, "if I do not discover by the style and tenor of the letters from Morristown how little I have to expect from thence. Generals are so far like parsons, they are all for christening their own child first; but, let an impartial moderating power decide between us and do not suffer Southern prejudices to weigh heavier in the balance than the Northern."*

A letter from Mr. Lovell, dated the 23d of May, put an end to the suspense of the general with respect to his position. "Misconceptions of past resolves and consequent jealousies," writes he, "have produced a definition of the Northern department, and General Schuyler, is ordered to take command of it. The resolve, also, which was thought to *fix* head-quarters at Albany, is repealed."

Such a resolve had actually been passed on the 22d, and Albany, Ticonderoga, Fort Stanwix, and their dependencies, were thenceforward to be considered as forming the Northern department. The envoy of Gates, bearing the letter in which he had carved out a command for Schuyler at Peekskill, arrived at Philadelphia too late. The general was already provided for.

Schuyler was received with open arms at Albany, on the 3d of June. "I had the satisfaction," writes he, "to experience the finest feeling which my country expressed on my arrival and reappointment. The day after my arrival, the whole country committee did me the honor in form to congratulate me."

Gates was still in Albany, delaying to proceed with General Fermois to Ticonderoga until the garrison should be sufficiently strengthened. Although the resolve of Congress did but define his position, which had been misunderstood, he persisted in considering himself degraded; declined serving under General Schuyler, who would have given him the post at Ticonderoga in his absence; and obtaining permission to leave the department, set out on the 9th for Philadelphia, to demand redress of Congress.

General St. Clair was sent to take command of the troops at Ticonderoga, accompanied by General Fermois. As the whole force in the Northern department would not be sufficient to command the extensive works there on both sides of the lake, St. Clair was instructed to bestow his first attention in fortifying Mount Independence, on the east side, Schuyler considering it much the most defensible, and that it might be made capable of sustaining a long and vigorous siege.

"I am fully convinced," writes he, "that between two and

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

three thousand men can effectually maintain Mount Independence and secure the pass."

It would be imprudent, he thought, to station the greater part of the forces at Fort Ticonderoga; as, should the enemy be able to invest it, and cut off the communication with the country on the east side, it might experience a disaster similar to that at Fort Washington.

The orders of Schuyler to officers commanding posts in the department, are characterized by his Dutch attention to cleanliness as to the quarters of the soldiers, their bedding, clothing, and equipments.

All officers mounting guard, were to have their hair dressed and powdered. The adjutants of the several corps were to be particularly careful that none of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers mount guard without having their hair dressed and powdered, their persons perfectly clean, and their arms and accoutrements in the most complete order.

While Schuyler was thus providing for the security of Ticonderoga, and enforcing cleanliness in his department, Gates was wending his way to Philadelphia, his bosom swelling with imaginary wrongs. He arrived there on the 18th. The next day at noon, Mr. Roger Sherman, an Eastern delegate, informed Congress that General Gates was waiting at the door, and wished admittance.

"For what purpose?" it was asked.

"To communicate intelligence of importance," replied Mr. Sherman.

Gates was accordingly ushered in, took his seat in an elbow chair, and proceeded to give some news concerning the Indians; their friendly dispositions, their delight at seeing French officers in the American service, and other matters of the kind; then, drawing forth some papers from his pocket, he opened upon the real object of his visit; stating from his notes, in a flurried and disjointed manner, the easy and happy life he had left to take up arms for the liberties of America; and how strenuously he had exerted himself in its defense; how that some time in March he had been appointed to a command in the Northern department; but that a few days since, without having given any cause of offense, without accusation, without trial, without hearing, without notice, he had received a resolution by which he was, in a most disgraceful manner, superseded in his command. Here his irritated feelings got the better of his judgment, and he indulged in angry reproaches of Congress, and recitals of a conversation which had taken place between him and Mr. Duane, a member of the House whom he

considered his enemy. Here Mr. Duane rose, and addressing himself to the president, hoped the general would observe order, and cease any personal observations, as he could not, in Congress, enter into any controversy with him upon the subject of former conversations.

Other of the members took fire; the conduct of the general was pronounced disrespectful to the House, and unworthy of himself, and it was moved and seconded that he be requested to withdraw. Some of the Eastern delegates opposed the motion, and endeavored to palliate his conduct. A wordy clamor ensued, during which the general stood, his papers in his hand, endeavoring several times to be heard, but the clamor increasing, he withdrew with the utmost indignation. It was then determined that he should not again be admitted on the floor; but should be informed that Congress were ready and willing to hear, by way of memorial, any grievances of which he might have to complain.*

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HIGHLAND PASSES OF THE HUDSON.—GEORGE CLINTON IN COMMAND OF THE FORTS.—HIS MEASURES FOR DEFENSE.—GENERALS GREENE AND KNOX EXAMINE THE STATE OF THE FORTS.—THEIR REPORT.—THE GENERAL COMMAND OF THE HUDSON OFFERED TO ARNOLD.—DECLINED BY HIM.—GIVEN TO PUTNAM.—APPOINTMENT OF DR. CRAIK IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.—EXPEDITION PLANNED AGAINST FORT INDEPENDENCE.—BUT RELINQUISHED.—WASHINGTON SHIFTS HIS CAMP TO MIDDLEBROOK.—STATE OF HIS ARMY.—GENERAL HOWE CROSSES INTO THE JERSEYS.—POSITION OF THE TWO ARMIES AT MIDDLEBROOK AND BEHIND THE RARITAN.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND COLONEL REED.

THE Highland passes of the Hudson, always objects of anxious thought to Washington; were especially so at this juncture. General McDougall still commanded at Peekskill, and General George Clinton, who resided at New Windsor, had command of the Highland forts. The latter, at the earnest request of the New York Convention, had received from Congress the command of brigadier-general in the Continental army. "My precarious state of health and want of military knowl-

* Letter of the Hon: Wm. Duer. Schuyler's *Papers*,

edge," writes he, "would have rather induced me to have led a more retired life than that of the army, had I been consulted on the occasion; but as, early in the present contest, I laid it down as a maxim not to refuse my best, though poor services, to my country in any way they should think proper to employ me, I cannot refuse the honor done me in the present appointment."*

He was perfectly sincere in what he said. George Clinton was one of the soldiers of the Revolution who served from a sense of duty, not from military inclination or a thirst for glory. A long career of public service in various capacities illustrated his modest worth and devoted patriotism.

When the "unhappy affair of Peekskill" had alarmed the Convention of New York for the safety of the forts on the Highlands, Clinton, authorized by that body, had ordered out part of the militia of Orange, Dutchess, and Westchester counties, without waiting for Washington's approbation of the measure. He had strengthened, also, with anchors and cables, the chain drawn across the river at Fort Montgomery. "Had the Convention suffered me to have paid my whole attention to this business," writes he to Washington (18th April), "it would have been nearly completed by this time."

A few days later came word that several transports were anchored at Dobb's Ferry in the Tappan Sea. It might be intended to divert attention from a movement towards the Delaware; or to make incursions into the country back of Morristown, seize on the passes through the mountains, and cut off the communication between the army and the Hudson. To frustrate such a design, Washington ordered Clinton to post as good a number of troops from his garrison as he could spare, on the mountains west of the river.

In the month of May, he writes to General McDougall:

"The imperfect state of the fortifications of Fort Montgomery gives me great uneasiness, because I think, from a concurrence of circumstances, that it begins to look as if the enemy intended to turn their view towards the North River instead of the Delaware. I therefore desire that General George Clinton and yourself will fall upon every measure to put the fortifications in such a state that they may at least resist a sudden attack, and keep the enemy employed till reinforcements may arrive. If the North River is their object, they cannot accomplish it unless they withdraw their forces from the Jerseys, and that they cannot do unknown to us."

On the 12th of May, General Greene received instructions

* Clinton to Washington.

from Washington to proceed to the Highlands, and examine the state and condition of the forts, especially Fort Montgomery: the probability of an attack by water, the practicability of an approach by land; where and how this could be effected, and the eminences whence the forts could be annoyed. This done, and the opinions of the general officers present having been consulted, he was to give such orders and make such disposition of the troops as might appear necessary for the greater security of the passes by land and water. When reconnoitering the Highlands in the preceding year, Washington had remarked a wild and rugged pass on the western side of the Hudson round Bull Hill, a rocky, forest-clad mountain, forming an advance rampart at the entrance to Peekskill Bay. "This pass," he observed, "*should also be attended to, lest the enemy by a coup de main should possess themselves of it, before a sufficient force could be assembled to oppose them.*" Subsequent events will illustrate, though unfortunately, the sagacity and foresight of this particular instruction.

General Knox was associated with General Greene in this visit of inspection. They examined the river and the passes of the Highlands in company with Generals McDougall, George Clinton, and Anthony Wayne. The latter, recently promoted to the rank of brigadier, had just returned from Ticonderoga. The five generals made a joint report to Washington, in which they recommended the completion of the obstructions in the river already commenced. These consisted of a boom, or heavy iron chain, across the river from Fort Montgomery to Anthony's Nose, with cables stretched in front to break the force of any ship under way, before she could strike it. The boom was to be protected by the guns of two ships and two row galleys stationed just above it, and by batteries on shore. This, it was deemed, would be sufficient to prevent the enemy's ships from ascending the river. If these obstructions could be rendered effective, they did not think the enemy would attempt to operate by land, "the passes through the Highlands being so exceedingly difficult."

The general command of the Hudson, from the number of troops to be assembled there, and the variety of points to be guarded, was one of the most important in the service, and required an officer of consummate energy, activity and judgment. It was a major-general's command, and as such was offered by Washington to Arnold; intending thus publicly to manifest his opinion of his deserts, and hoping, by giving him so important a post, to appease his irritated feelings.

Arnold, however, declined to accept it. In an interview with

Washington at Morristown, he alleged his anxiety to proceed to Philadelphia and settle his public accounts, which were of considerable amount; especially as reports had been circulated injurious to his character as a man of integrity. He intended, therefore, to wait on Congress, and request a committee of inquiry into his conduct. Besides, he did not consider the promotion conferred on him by Congress sufficient to obviate their previous neglect, as it did not give him the rank he had a claim to, from seniority in the line of brigadiers. In their last resolve respecting him, they had acknowledged him competent to the station of major-general, and, therefore, had done away every objection implied by their former omission. With these considerations he proceeded to Philadelphia, bearing a letter from Washington to the President of Congress, countenancing his complaints, and testifying to the excellence of his military character. We may here add, that the accusations against him were pronounced false and slanderous by the Board of War; that the report of the board was confirmed by Congress, but that Arnold was still left aggrieved and unredressed in point of rank.

The important command of the Hudson being declined by Arnold, was now given to Putman, who repaired forthwith to Peekskill. General McDougall was requested by Washington to aid the veteran in gaining a knowledge of the post. "You are well acquainted," writes he, "with the old gentleman's temper; he is active, disinterested, and open to conviction."

Putman set about promptly to carry into effect the measures of security which Greene and Knox had recommended; especially the boom and chain at Fort Montgomery, about which General Clinton had busied himself. Putman had a peculiar fancy for river obstructions of the kind. A large part of the New York and New England troops were stationed at this post, not merely to guard the Hudson, but to render aid either to the Eastern or Middle States in case of exigency.

About this time, Washington had the satisfaction of drawing near to him his old friend and travelling companion, Dr. James Craik, the same who had served with him in Braddock's campaign, and had voyaged with him down the Ohio; for whom he now procured the appointment of assistant director-general of the hospital department of the Middle district, which included the States between the Hudson and the Potomac. In offering the situation to the doctor, he writes, "You know how far you may be benefited or injured by such an appointment, and whether it is advisable or practicable for you to quit your family and practice at this time. I request, as a friend, that my pro-

posing this matter to you may have no influence upon your acceptance of it. I have no other end in view than to serve you." Dr. Craik, it will be found, remained his attached and devoted friend through life.

It had been Washington's earnest wish in the early part of the spring, to take advantage of the inactivity of the enemy, and attempt some "capital stroke" for the benefit of the next campaign; but the want of troops prevented him. He now planned a night expedition for Putnam, exactly suited to the humor of the old general. He was to descend the Hudson in boats, surprise Fort Independence at Spyt den Duivel Creek, capture the garrison, and sweep the road between that post and the Highlands. Putnam was all on fire for the enterprise, when movements on the part of the enemy, seemingly indicative of a design upon Philadelphia, obliged Washington to abandon the project, and exert all his vigilance in watching the hostile operations in the Jerseys.

Accordingly, towards the end of May, he broke up his cantonments at Morristown, and shifted his camp to Middlebrook, within ten miles of Brunswick. His whole force fit for duty was now about seven thousand three hundred men, all from the States south of the Hudson. There were forty-three regiments, forming ten brigades, commanded by Brigadiers Muhlenberg, Weedon, Woodford, Scott, Smallwood, Deborre, Wayne, Dehaas, Conway, and Maxwell. These were apportioned into five divisions of two brigades each, under Major-generals Greene, Stephen, Sullivan, Lincoln, and Stirling. The artillery was commanded by Knox. Sullivan, with his division, was stationed on the right at Princeton. With the rest of his force Washington fortified himself in a position naturally strong, among hills, in the rear of the village of Middlebrook. His camp was, on all sides, difficult of approach, and he rendered it still more so by intrenchments. The high grounds about it commanded a wide view of the country around Brunswick, the road to Philadelphia, and the course of the Raritan, so that the enemy could make no important movement on land, without his perceiving it.

It was now the beautiful season of the year, and the troops from their height beheld a fertile and well cultivated country spread before them, "painted with meadows, green fields, and orchards, studded with villages, and affording abundant supplies and forage." A part of their duty was to guard it from the ravage of the enemy, while they held themselves ready to counteract his movements in every direction.

On the 31st of May, reports were brought to camp that a fleet of a hundred sail had left New York, and stood out to sea.

Whither bound, and how freighted, was unknown. If they carried troops, their destination might be Delaware Bay. Eighteen transports, also, had arrived at New York, with troops in foreign uniforms. Were they those which had been in Canada, or others immediately from Germany? Those who had reconnoitered them with glasses could not tell. All was matter of anxious conjecture.

Lest the fleet which had put to sea should be bound further south than Delaware Bay, Washington instantly wrote to Patrick Henry, at that time governor of Virginia, putting him on his guard. "Should this fleet arrive on your coast, and the enemy attempt to penetrate the country, or make incursions I would recommend that the earliest opposition be made by parties and detachments of militia, without waiting to collect a large body. I am convinced that this would be attended with the most salutary consequences, and that greater advantages would be derived from it, than by deferring the opposition till you assembled a number equal to that of the enemy."

The troops in foreign uniforms which had landed from the transports, proved to be Anspachers, and other German mercenaries; there were British reinforcements also; and, what was particularly needed, a supply of tents and camp equipage. Sir William Howe had been waiting for the latter, and likewise until the ground should be covered with grass.*

The country was now in full verdure, affording "green forage" in abundance, and all things seemed to Sir William propitious for the opening of the campaign. Early in June, therefore, he gave up ease and gayety, and luxurious life at New York, and crossing into the Jerseys, set up his headquarters at Brunswick.

As soon as Washington ascertained that Sir William's attention was completely turned to this quarter, he determined to strengthen his position with all the force that could be spared from other parts, so as to be able, in case a favorable opportunity presented, to make an attack upon the enemy; in the meantime, he would harass them with his light militia troops, aided by a few Continentals, so as to weaken their numbers by continual skirmishes. With this view, he ordered General Putnam to send down most of the continental troops from Peekskill, leaving only a number sufficient, in conjunction with the militia, to guard that post against surprise. They were to proceed in three divisions, under Generals Parsons, McDougall, and Glover, at one day's march distant from each other.

Arnold, in this critical juncture, had been put in command

* Evidence of Major-general Grey before the House of Commons.

of Philadelphia, a post which he had been induced to accept, although the question of rank had not been adjusted to his satisfaction. His command embraced the western bank of the Delaware with all its fords and passes, and he took up his station there with a strong body of militia, supported by a few Continentals, to oppose any attempt of the enemy to cross the river. He was instructed by Washington to give him notice by expresses, posted on the road, if any fleet should appear in Delaware Bay; and to endeavor to concert signals with the camp of Sullivan at Princeton, by alarm fires upon the hills.

On the night of the 13th of June, General Howe sallied forth in great force from Brunswick, as if pushing directly for the Delaware, but his advanced guard halted at Somerset court-house, about eight or nine miles distant. Apprised of this movement, Washington at day-break reconnoitered the enemy from the heights before the camp. He observed their front halting at the court-house, but a few miles distant, while troops and artillery were grouped here and there along the road, and the rear-guard was still at Brunswick. It was a question with Washington and his generals, as they reconnoitered the enemy with their glasses, whether this was a real move toward Philadelphia, or merely a lure to tempt them down from their strong position. In this uncertainty, Washington drew out his army in battle array along the heights, but kept quiet. In the present state of his forces it was his plan not to risk a general action; but, should the enemy really march toward the Delaware, to hang heavily upon their rear. Their principal difficulty would be in crossing that river, and there, he trusted, they would meet with spirited opposition from the continental troops and militia, stationed on the western side under Arnold and Mifflin.

The British took up a strong position, having Millstone Creek on their left, the Raritan all along their front, and their right resting on Brunswick, and proceeded to fortify themselves with bastions.

While thus anxiously situated, Washington, on the 14th, received a letter from Colonel Reed, his former secretary and confidential friend. A coolness had existed on the general's part, ever since he had unwarily opened the satirical letter of General Lee; yet he had acted towards Reed with his habitual highmindedness, and had recently nominated him as general of cavalry. The latter had deeply deplored the interruption of their once unreserved intercourse: he had long, he said, desired to have one hour of private conversation with Washington on the subject of Lee's letter, but had deferred it in the hope of

obtaining his own letter to which that was an answer. In that he had been disappointed by Lee's captivity. On the present occasion, Reed's heart was full, and he refers to former times in language that is really touching:—

"I am sensible, my dear sir," writes he, "how difficult it is to regain lost friendship; but the consciousness of never having justly forfeited yours, and the hope that it may be in my power fully to convince you of it, are some consolation for an event which I never think of but with the greatest concern. In the meantime, my dear general, let me entreat you to judge of me by realities, not by appearances; and believe that I never entertained or expressed a sentiment incompatible with that regard I professed for your person and character, and which, whether I shall be so happy as to possess your future good opinion or not, I shall carry to my grave with me.

"A late perusal of the letters you honored me with at Cambridge and New York, last year, afforded me a melancholy pleasure. I cannot help acknowledging myself deeply affected, in a comparison with those which I have since received. I should not, my dear sir, have trespassed on your time and patience at this juncture so long, but that a former letter upon this subject I fear has miscarried; and whatever may be my future destination and course of life, I could not support the reflection of being thought ungrateful and insincere to a friendship which was equally my pride and my pleasure. May God Almighty crown your virtue, my dear and much respected general, with deserved success, and make your life as happy and honorable to yourself as it has been useful to your country."

The heart of Washington was moved by this appeal, and though in the midst of military preparations, with a hostile army at hand, he detained Colonel Reed's messenger long enough to write a short letter in reply: "to thank you," said he, "as I do most sincerely, for the friendly and affectionate sentiments contained in yours towards me, and to assure you that I am perfectly convinced of the sincerity of them.

"True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter which appeared at that time to be the echo of one from you; I was hurt—not because I thought my judgment wronged by the expressions contained in it, but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favorable manner in which your opinions, upon all occasions, had been received, the impressions they made, and the unreserved manner in which I wished and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with anything, then, that carried with it a com-

plexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuity, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to."

Washington was not of a distrustful spirit. From this moment, we are told that all estrangement disappeared, and the ancient relations of friendly confidence between him and Colonel Reed were restored.* His whole conduct throughout the affair bears evidence of his candor and magnanimity.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FEIGNED MOVEMENTS OF SIR WILLIAM HOWE.—BAFFLING CAUTION OF WASHINGTON. — RUMORED INROADS FROM THE NORTH. — SCHUYLER APPLIES FOR REINFORCEMENTS. — RENewed SCHEMES OF HOWE TO DRAW WASHINGTON FROM HIS STRONGHOLD.—SKIRMISH BETWEEN CORNWALLIS AND LORD STIRLING.—THE ENEMY EVACUATE THE JERSEYS.—PERPLEXITY AS TO THEIR NEXT MOVEMENT.—A HOSTILE FLEET ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.—BURGOYNE APPROACHING TICONDEROGA.—SPECULATIONS OF WASHINGTON—HIS PURPOSE OF KEEPING SIR WILLIAM HOWE FROM ASCENDING THE HUDSON.—ORDERS GEORGE CLINTON TO CALL OUT MILITIA FROM ULSTER AND ORANGE COUNTIES.—SENDS SULLIVAN TOWARDS THE HIGHLANDS.—MOVES HIS OWN CAMP BACK TO MORRISTOWN. STIR AMONG THE SHIPPING.—THEIR DESTINATION SURMISED TO BE PHILADELPHIA.—A DINNER AT HEAD-QUARTERS.—ALEXANDER HAMILTON.—GRAYDON'S RUEFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE ARMY.—HIS CHARACTER OF WAYNE.

THE American and British armies, strongly posted, as we have shown, the former along the heights of Middlebrook, the other beyond the Raritan, remained four days grimly regarding each other: both waiting to be attacked. The Jersey militia, which now turned out with alacrity, repaired, some to Washington's camp, others to that of Sullivan. The latter had fallen back from Princeton, and taken a position behind the Sourland Hills.

Howe pushed out detachments, and made several feints, as if to pass by the American camp and march to the Delaware; but Washington was not to be deceived. "The enemy will not

* *Life of Reed*, by his grandson.

move that way," said he, "until they have given this army a severe blow. The risk would be too great to attempt to cross a river where they must expect to meet a formidable opposition in front, and would have such a force as ours in their rear." He kept on the heights, therefore, and strengthened his intrenchments.

Baffled in these attempts to draw his cautious adversary into a general action, Howe, on the 19th, suddenly broke up his camp, and pretended to return with some precipitation to Brunswick, burning as he went several valuable dwelling-houses. Washington's light troops hovered round the enemy as far as the Raritan and Millstone, which secured their flanks, would permit; but the main army kept to its stronghold on the heights.

On the next day came warlike news from the North. Amesbury, a British spy, had been seized and examined by Schuyler. Burgoyne was stated as being arrived at Quebec to command the forces in an invasion from Canada. While he advanced with his main force by Lake Champlain, a detachment of British troops, Canadians and Indians, led by Sir John Johnson, was to penetrate by Oswego to the Mohawk River, and place itself between Fort Stanwix and Fort Edward.

If this information was correct, Ticonderoga would soon be attacked. The force there might be sufficient for its defense, but Schuyler would have no troops to oppose the inroad of Sir John Johnson, and he urged a reinforcement. Washington forthwith sent orders to Putnam to procure sloops, and hold four Massachusetts regiments in readiness to go up the river at a moment's warning. Still, if the information of the spy was correct, he doubted the ability of the enemy to carry the reported plan into effect. It did not appear that Burgoyne had brought any reinforcements from Europe. If so, he could not move with a greater force than five thousand men. The garrison at Ticonderoga was sufficiently strong, according to former accounts, to hold it against an attack. Burgoyne certainly would never leave it in his rear, and if he invested it, he would not have a sufficient number left to send one body to Oswego and another to cut off the communications between Fort Edward and Fort George. Such was Washington's reasoning in a reply to Schuyler. In the meantime he retained his mind unflurried by these new rumors; keeping from his heights a vigilant eye upon General Howe.

On the 22d, Sir William again marched out of Brunswick, but this time proceeded towards Amboy, again burning several houses on the way; hoping, perhaps, that the sight of columns

of smoke rising from a ravaged country would irritate the Americans and provoke an attack. Washington sent out three brigades under General Green to fall upon the rear of the enemy, while Morgan hung upon their skirts with his riflemen. At the same time the army remained paraded on the heights, ready to yield support, if necessary.

Finding that Howe had actually sent his heavy baggage and part of his troops over to Staten Island by a bridge of boats which he had thrown across, Washington, on the 24th, left the heights and descended to Quibbletown (now New Market), six or seven miles on the road to Amboy, to be nearer at hand for the protection of his advanced parties; while Lord Stirling with his division and some light troops was at Matouchin church, closer to the enemy's lines, to watch their motions, and be ready to harass them while crossing to the island.

General Howe now thought he had gained his point. Recalling those who had crossed, he formed his troops into two columns, the right led by Cornwallis, the left by himself, and marched back rapidly by different routes from Amboy. He had three objects in view; to cut off the principal advanced parties of the Americans; to come up with and bring the main body into an engagement near Quibbletown; or that Lord Cornwallis, making a considerable circuit to the right, should turn the left of Washington's position, get to the heights, take possession of the passes, and oblige him to abandon that stronghold where he had hitherto been so secure.*

Washington, however, had timely notice of his movements, and penetrating his design, regained his fortified camp at Middlebrook, and secured the passes of the mountains. He then detached a body of light troops under Brigadier-general Scott, together with Morgan's riflemen, to hang on the flank of the enemy and watch their motions.

Cornwallis, in his circuitous march, dispersed the light parties of the advance, but fell in with Lord Stirling's division, strongly posted in a woody country, and well covered by artillery judiciously disposed. A sharp skirmish ensued, when the Americans gave way and retreated to the hills, with the loss of a few men and three fieldpieces; while the British halted at Westfield, disappointed in the main objects of their enterprise. They remained at Westfield until the afternoon of the 27th, when they moved toward Spanktown (now Rahway), plundering all before them, and, it is said, burning several houses; but pursued and harassed the whole way by the American light troops.*

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i, p. 247.

† Letter to the President of Congress, 28th June, 1777.

Perceiving that every scheme of bringing the Americans to a general action, or at least of withdrawing them from their strongholds, was rendered abortive by the caution and prudence of Washington, and aware of the madness of attempting to march to the Delaware, through a hostile country, with such a force in his rear, Sir William Howe broke up his head-quarters at Amboy on the last of June, and crossed over to Staten Island on the floating bridge; his troops that were encamped opposite to Amboy struck their tents on the following day, and marched off to the old camping ground on the bay of New York; the ships got under way, and moved down round the island; and it was soon apparent, that at length the enemy had really evacuated the Jerseys.

The question now was, what would be their next move? A great stir among the shipping seemed to indicate an expedition by water. But whither? Circumstances occurred to perplex the question.

Scarce had the last tent been struck, and the last transport disappeared from before Amboy, when intelligence arrived from General St. Clair, announcing the appearance of a hostile fleet on Lake Champlain, and that General Burgoyne with the whole Canada army was approaching Ticonderoga. The judgment and circumspection of Washington were never more severely put to the proof. Was this merely a diversion with a small force of light troops and Indians, intended to occupy the attention of the American forces in that quarter, while the main body of the army in Canada should come round by sea, and form a junction with the army under Howe? But General Burgoyne, in Washington's opinion, was a man of too much spirit and enterprise to return from England merely to execute a plan from which no honor was to be derived. Did he really intend to break through by the way of Ticonderoga? In that case it must be Howe's plan to coöperate with him. Had all the recent manoeuvres of the enemy in the Jerseys, which had appeared so enigmatical to Washington, been merely a stratagem to amuse him until they should receive intelligence of the movements of Burgoyne? If so, Sir William must soon throw off the mask. His next move, in such case, would be to ascend the Hudson, seize on the Highland passes before Washington could form a union with the troops stationed there, and thus open the way for the junction with Burgoyne. Should Washington, however, on such a presumption, hasten with his troops to Peekskill, leaving General Howe on Staten Island, what would prevent the latter from pushing to Philadelphia by South Amboy or any other route?

Such were the perplexities and difficulties presenting themselves under every aspect of the case, and discussed by Washington in his correspondence with his accustomed clearness. In this dilemma he sent generals Parsons and Varnum with a couple of brigades in all haste to Peekskill, and wrote to generals George Clinton and Putnam; the former to call out the New York militia from Orange and Ulster counties; the latter to summon the militia from Connecticut; and as soon as such reinforcements should be at hand, to despatch four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments to the aid of Ticonderoga; at the same time the expediency was suggested to General Schuyler, of having all the cattle and vehicles removed from such parts of the country which he might think the enemy intended to penetrate.

General Sullivan, moreover, was ordered to advance with his division towards the Highlands as far as Pompton, while Washington moved his own camp back to Morristown, to be ready either to push on to the Highlands, or fall back upon his recent position at Middlebrook, according to the movements of the enemy. "If I can keep General Howe below the Highlands," said he, "I think their schemes will be entirely baffled."

Deserters from Staten Island and New York soon brought word to the camp that transports were being fitted up with berths for horses, and taking in three weeks' supply of water and provender. All this indicated some other destination than that of the Hudson. Lest an attempt on the Eastern States should be intended, Washington sent a circular to their governors to put them on their guard.

In the midst of his various cares, his yeoman soldiery, the Jersey militia, were not forgotten. It was their harvest time; and the State being evacuated, there was no immediate call for their services; he dismissed, therefore, almost the whole of them to their homes.

Captain Graydon, whose memoirs we have heretofore had occasion to quote, paid a visit to the camp at this juncture, in company with Colonel Miles and Major West, all American prisoners on Long Island, but who had been liberated on parole. Graydon remarks that, to their great surprise, they saw no military parade upon their journey, nor any indication of martial vigor on the part of the country. Here and there a militia man with his contrasted colored cape and facings; doubtless some one who had received his furlough, and was bound home to his farm. Captains, majors, and colonels abounded in the land, but were not to be found at the head of their men.

When he arrived at the camp, he could see nothing which deserved the name of army. "I was told, indeed," remarks he, "that it was much weakened by detachments, and I was glad to find there was some cause for the present paucity of soldiers. I could not doubt, however, that things were going on well. The commander-in-chief and all about him were in excellent spirits." The three officers waited on Washington at his marquee in the evening. In the course of conversation, he asked them what they conceived to be the objects of General Howe. Colonel Miles replied, a coöperation with the Northern army by means of the Hudson. Washington acknowledged that indications and probabilities tended to that conclusion; nevertheless, he had little doubt the object of Howe was Philadelphia.

Graydon and his companions dined the next day at headquarters; there was a large party, in which were several ladies. Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who, in the preceding month of April, had been received into Washington's family as aide-de-camp, presided at the head of the table, and "acquitted himself," writes Graydon, "with an ease, propriety, and vivacity which gave me the most favorable impression of his talents and accomplishments."

We may here observe that the energy, skill, and intelligence displayed by Hamilton throughout the last year's campaign, whenever his limited command gave him opportunity of evincing them, had won his entrance to head-quarters; where his quick discernment and precocious judgment were soon fully appreciated. Strangers were surprised to see a youth, scarce twenty years of age, received into the implicit confidence, and admitted into the gravest counsels of a man like Washington. While his uncommon talents thus commanded respect, rarely inspired by one of his years, his juvenile appearance and buoyant spirit made him a universal favorite. Harrison, the "old secretary," much his senior, looked upon him with an almost paternal eye, and regarding his diminutive size and towering spirit, used to call him "the little lion;" while Washington would now and then speak of him by the cherishing appellation of "my boy."*

* Communicated to the author by the late Mrs. Hamilton.

NOTE.—A veteran officer of the Revolution used to speak in his old days of the occasion on which he first saw Hamilton. It was during the memorable retreat through the Jerseys. "I noticed," said he, "a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching beside a piece of artillery with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on the cannon, and every now and then patting it as he mused, as if it were a favorite horse, or a pet plaything."

The following is Graydon's amusing account of Wayne, whom he visited at his quarters. "He entertained the most sovereign contempt for the enemy. In his confident way, he affirmed that the two armies had interchanged their original modes of warfare. That for our parts, we had thrown away the shovel, and the British had taken it up; as they dared not face us without the cover of an intrenchment. I made some allowance for the fervid manner of the general, who, though unquestionably as brave a man as any in the army, was nevertheless somewhat addicted to the vaunting style of Marshal Villers, a man who, like himself, could fight as well as brag."

Graydon speaks of the motley, shabby clothing of the troops. "Even in General Wayne himself, there was in this particular a considerable falling off. His quondam regimentals as colonel of the 4th battalion were, I think, blue and white, in which he had been accustomed to appear with exemplary neatness; whereas he was now dressed in character for Macheath or Captain Gibbet, in a dingy red coat, with a black rusty cravat and tarnished hat." Wayne was doubtless still rusty from his campaign in the north.

Graydon, during his recent captivity, had been accustomed to the sight of British troops in the completeness of martial array, and looked with a rueful eye on patriotism in rags. From all that he saw at the camp, he suspected affairs were not in a prosperous train, notwithstanding the cheerful countenances at head-quarters. There appeared to be a want of animated co-operation both on the part of the government and the people. "General Washington, with the little remnant of his army at Morristown, seemed left to scuffle for liberty, like another Cato at Utica."*

We will now turn to the north, and lift the curtain for a moment, to give the reader a glance at affairs in that quarter, about which there was such dubious rumors.

* Graydon's *Memoirs*, 282.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BRITISH INVASION FROM CANADA.—THE PLAN.—COMPOSITION OF THE INVADING ARMY.—SCHUYLER ON THE ALERT.—HIS SPECULATIONS AS TO THE ENEMY'S DESIGNS.—BURGOYNE ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.—HIS WAR-SPEECH TO HIS INDIAN ALLIES.—SIGNS OF HIS APPROACH DESCRIBED FROM TICONDEROGA.—CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SUBJECT BETWEEN ST. CLAIR, MAJOR LIVINGSTON, AND SCHUYLER.—BURGOYNE INTRENCHES NEAR TICONDEROGA.—HIS PROCLAMTION.—SCHUYLER'S EXERTIONS AT ALBANY TO FORWARD REINFORCEMENTS.—HEARS THAT TICONDEROGA IS EVACUATED.—MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF ST. CLAIR AND HIS TROOPS.—AMAZEMENT AND CONCERN OF WASHINGTON.—ORDERS REINFORCEMENTS TO SCHUYLER AT FORT EDWARD, AND TO PUTNAM AT PEEKSKILL.—ADVANCES WITH HIS MAIN ARMY TO THE CLOVE.—HIS HOPEFUL SPIRIT MANIFESTED.

THE armament advancing against Ticonderoga, of which General St. Clair had given intelligence, was not a mere diversion, but a regular invasion; the plan of which had been devised by the king, Lord George Germaine, and General Burgoyne, the latter having returned to England from Canada in the preceding year. The junction of the two armies—that in Canada and that under General Howe in New York—was considered the speediest mode of quelling the rebellion: and as the security and good government of Canada required the presence of Governor Sir Guy Carleton, three thousand men were to remain there with him; the residue of the army was to be employed upon two expeditions; the one under General Burgoyne, who was to force his way to Albany, the other under Lieutenant-colonel St. Leger, who was to make a diversion on the Mohawk River.

The invading army was composed of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-four British rank and file, three thousand and sixteen Germans, mostly Brunswickers, two hundred and fifty Canadians, and four hundred Indians; beside these there were four hundred and seventy-three artillery-men, in all nearly eight thousand men. The army was admirably appointed. Its brass train of artillery was extolled as perhaps the finest ever allotted to an army of the size. General Phillips who com-

manded the artillery, had gained great reputation in the wars in Germany. Brigadier-generals Fraser, Powel, and Hamilton, were also officers of distinguished merit. So was Major-general the Baron Riedesel, a Brunswicker, who commanded the German troops.

While Burgoyne with the main force proceeded from St. John's, Colonel St. Leger, with a detachment of regulars and Canadians about seven hundred strong, was to land at Oswego, and, guided by Sir John Johnson at the head of his loyalist volunteers, tory refugees from his former neighborhood, and a body of Indians, was to enter the Mohawk country, draw the attention of General Schuyler in that direction, attack Fort Stanwix, and, having ravaged the valley of the Mohawk, rejoin Burgoyne at Albany where it was expected they would make a triumphant junction with the army of Sir William Howe.

General Burgoyne left St. John's on the 16th of June. Some idea may be formed of his buoyant anticipation of a triumphant progress through the country, by the manifold and lumbering appurtenances of a European camp with which his army was encumbered. In this respect he had committed the same error in his campaign through a wilderness of lakes and forests, that had once embarrassed the unfortunate Braddock in his march across the mountains of Virginia.

Schuyler was uncertain as to the plans and force of the enemy. If information gathered from scouts and a captured spy might be relied on Ticonderoga would soon be attacked; but he trusted the garrison was sufficient to maintain it. This information he transmitted to Washington from Fort Edward on the 16th, the very day that Burgoyne embarked at St. John's.

On the following day Schuyler was at Ticonderoga. The works were not in such a state of forwardness as he had anticipated, owing to the tardy arrival of troops, and the want of a sufficient number of artificers. The works in question related chiefly to Mount Independence, a high circular hill on the east side of the lake, immediately opposite to the old fort, and considered the most defensible. A star fort with pickets crowned the summit of the hill, which was table land; half way down the side of the hill was a battery, and at its foot were strongly intrenched works well mounted with cannon. Here the French General de Fermois, who had charge of this fort, was posted.

As this part of Lake Champlain is narrow, a connection was kept up between the two forts by a floating bridge, supported on twenty-two sunken piers in caissons, formed of very strong timber. Between the piers were separated floats, fifty feet long and twelve feet wide, strongly connected by iron chains

and rivets. On the north side of the bridge was a boom, composed of large pieces of timber, secured by riveted bolts, and beside this was a double iron chain with links an inch and a half square. The bridge, boom, and chain were four hundred yards in length. This immense work, the labor of months, on which no expense had been spared, was intended, while it afforded a communication between the two forts, to protect the upper part of the lake, presenting, under cover of their guns, a barrier, which it was presumed no hostile ship would be able to break through.

Having noted the state of affairs and the wants of the garrison, Schuyler hastened to Fort George, whence he sent on provisions for upwards of sixty days; and from the banks of the Hudson additional carpenters and working cattle. "Business will now go in better train, and I hope with much more spirit," writes he to Congress; "and I trust we shall still be able to put everything in such order as to give the enemy a good reception, and, I hope, a repulse, should they attempt a real attack, which I conjecture will not be soon, if at all; although I expect they will approach with their fleet to keep us in alarm, and to draw our attention from other quarters where they may mean a real attack."

His idea was that, while their fleet and a small body of troops might appear before Ticonderoga, and keep up continual alarms, the main army might march from St. François and St. John's towards the Connecticut River, and make an attempt on the Eastern States. "A manoeuvre of this kind," observes he, "would be in General Burgoyne's way, and, if successful, would be attended with much honor to him. . . . I am the more confirmed in this conjecture, as the enemy cannot be ignorant how very difficult, if not impossible, it will be for them to penetrate to Albany, unless in losing Ticonderoga we should lose not only all our cannon, but most of the army designed for this department."

In the meantime, Burgoyne, with his amphibious and semi-barbarous armaments was advancing up the lake. On the 21st of June he encamped at the River Boquet, several miles north of Crown Point; here he gave a war feast to his savage allies, and made them a speech in that pompous and half poetical vein in which it is the absurd practice to address our savages, and which is commonly reduced to flat prose by their interpreters. At the same time he was strenuous in enjoining humanity toward prisoners, dwelling on the difference between ordinary wars carried on against a common enemy, and this against a country in rebellion, where the hostile parties were of the same

blood, and loyal subjects of the crown might be confounded with the rebellious. It was a speech intended to excite their ardor, but restrain their cruelty, a difficult medium to attain with Indian warriors.

The garrison of Ticonderoga, meanwhile, were anxiously on the lookout. Their fortress, built on a hill, commanded an extensive prospect over the bright and beautiful lake and its surrounding forests, but there were long points and promontories at a distance to intercept the view.

By the 24th, scouts began to bring in word of the approaching foe. Bark canoes had been seen filled with white men and savages. Then three vessels under sail, and one at anchor, above Split Rock, and behind it the radeau *Thunderer*, noted in the last year's naval fight. Anon came word of encampments sufficient for a large body of troops, on both sides of Gilliland's Creek, with bateaux plying about its waters, and painted warriors gliding about in canoes; while a number of smokes rising out of the forest at a distance beyond, gave signs of an Indian camp.

St. Clair wrote word of all this to Schuyler and that it was supposed the enemy were waiting the arrival of more force; he did not, however, think they intended to attack, but to harass, for the purpose of giving confidence to the Indians.

Schuyler transmitted a copy of St. Clair's letter to Washington. "If the enemy's object is not to attack Ticonderoga," writes he, "I suspect their movement is intended to cover an attempt on New Hampshire, or the Mohawk River, or to cut off the communication between Fort Edward and Fort George, or perhaps all three, the more to distract us and divide our force." He urged Washington for reinforcements as soon as possible. At the same time he wrote to St. Clair, to keep scouts on the east side of the lake near the road leading from St. John's to New Hampshire, and on the west, on the road leading to the north branch of the Hudson. This done, he hastened to Albany to forward reinforcements and bring up the militia.

While there, he received word from St. Clair, that the enemy's fleet and army were arrived at Crown Point, and had sent off detachments, one up Otter Creek to cut off the communication by Skenesborough; and another on the west side of the lake to cut off Fort George. It was evident a real attack on Ticonderoga was intended. Claims for assistance came hurrying on from other quarters. A large force (St. Leger's) was said to be arrived at Oswego, and Sir John Johnson with his myrmidons on his way to attack Fort Schuyler, the garrison of which was weak and poorly supplied with cannon.

Schuyler bestirs himself with his usual zeal amid the thickening alarms. He writes urgent letters to the Committee of Safety of New York, to General Putnam at Peekskill, to the governor of Connecticut, to the president of Massachusetts, to the committee of Berkshire, and lastly to Washington, stating the impending dangers and imploring reinforcements. He exhorts General Herkimer to keep the militia of Tryon County in readiness to protect the western frontier and to check the inroad of Sir John Johnson, and he assures St. Clair that he will move to his aid with the militia of New York, as soon as he can collect them.

Dangers accumulate at Ticonderoga according to advices from St. Clair (28th). Seven of the enemy's vessels are lying at Crown Point; the rest of their fleet is probably but a little lower down. Morning guns are heard distinctly at various places. Some troops have debarked and encamped at Chimney Point. There is no prospect, he says, of being able to defend Ticonderoga unless militia come in, and he has thought of calling in those from Berkshire. "Should the enemy invest and blockade us," writes he, "we are infallibly ruined; we shall be obliged to abandon this side (of the lake), and then they will soon force the other from us, nor do I see that a retreat will in any shape be practicable. Everything, however, shall be done that is practicable to frustrate the enemy's designs; but what can be expected from troops ill-armed, naked, and unaccoutred?"

Schuyler's aide-de-camp, Major Livingston,* who had been detained at Ticonderoga by indisposition, writes to him (June 30th) in a different vein, and presents a young man's view of affairs.

"The enemy, after giving us several alarms, made their appearance early this morning off Three Mile Point, in eighteen gunboats, and, about nine, landed a party of two or three hundred Indians and Canadians. These soon fell in with a scout from us, but being superior in number, obliged them to retreat, though without any loss on our side. The Indians then marched to the front of the French lines, drove in a picket guard, and came so near as to wound two men who were standing behind the works. They have stopped the communication between this and Lake George.

"We have a fair view of their boats, but cannot see that they have brought many regulars with them. At least the number of red-coats in them is very small. The wind having been

* Henry Brockholst Livingston: in after years judge of the Supreme Court of the United States.

contrary for several days, has prevented their fleet from coming up. The first fair breeze I shall expect to see them. Many bets are depending that we shall be attacked in the course of this week. Our troops are determined, and in great spirits. They wish to be permitted to drive the savages from Three Mile Point, but General St. Clair chooses to act on the sure side, and risk nothing. The few alarms we have had have been of great service in making the men alert and vigilant; but I am afraid the enemy will repeat them so frequently as to throw them into their former indolence and inattention. General St. Clair has taken the precaution to move most of the stores to the mount [Independence]. This moment two ships and as many sloops have hove in sight. Spirits of the men seem to increase in proportion to the number of the enemy.

"I cannot but esteem myself fortunate that indisposition prevented my returning with you, as it has given me an opportunity of being present at a battle, in which I promise myself the pleasure of seeing our army flushed with victory."*

The enemy came advancing up the lake on the 30th, their main body under Burgoyne on the west side, the German reserve under Baron Riedesel on the east; communication being maintained by frigates and gunboats, which, in a manner, kept pace between them. It was a magnificent array of warlike means; and the sound of drum and trumpet along the shores, and now and then the thundering of a cannon from the ships, were singularly in contrast with the usual silence of a region little better than a wilderness.

On the first of July, Burgoyne encamped four miles north of Ticonderoga, and began to intrench, and to throw a boom across the lake. His advanced guard under General Fraser took post at Three Mile point, and the ships anchored just out of gunshot of the fort.

Here he issued a proclamation still more magniloquent than his speech to the Indians, denouncing woe to all who should persist in rebellion, and laying particular stress upon his means, with the aid of the Indians, to overtake the hardiest enemies of Great Britain and America wherever they might lurk.

General St. Clair was a gallant Scotchman, who had seen service in the old French war as well as in this, and beheld the force arrayed against him without dismay. It is true his garrison was not so numerous as it had been represented to Washington, not exceeding three thousand five hundred men, of whom nine hundred were militia. They were badly equipped also, and few had bayonets: yet as Major Livingston re-

* Letter of Major Livingston to General Schuyler, MS.

ported, they were in good heart. St. Clair confided, however, in the strength of his position and the works which had been constructed in connection with it, and trusted he should be able to resist any attempt to take it by storm.

Schuyler at this time was at Albany, sending up reinforcements of continental troops and militia, and awaiting the arrival of further reinforcements, for which sloops had been sent down to Peekskill.

He was endeavoring also to provide for the security of the department in other quarters. The savages had been scalping in the neighborhood of Fort Schuyler; a set of renegade Indians were harassing the settlements on the Susquehanna; and the threatenings of Brant, the famous Indian chief, and the prospect of a British inroad by the way of Oswego, had spread terror though Tryon County, the inhabitants of which called upon him for support.

"The enemy are harassing us in every quarter of this department," writes he. "I am, however, happily, thank God, in full health and spirits to enable me to extend my attention to those various quarters, and hope we shall all do well."*

The enemy's manœuvre of intrenching themselves and throwing a boom across the lake, of which St. Clair informed him, made him doubt of their being in great force, or intending a serious attack. "I shall have great hopes," writes he to St. Clair, "if General Burgoyne continues in the vicinity of your post until we get up, and dares risk an engagement, we shall give a good account of him."†

To General Herkimer, who commanded the militia in Tryon County, he writes in the same encouraging strain. "From intelligence which I have just now received from Ticonderoga, I am not very apprehensive that any great effort will be made against the Mohawk River. I shall, however, keep a watchful eye to the preservation of the western quarter, and have therefore directed Colonel Van Schaick to remain in Tryon County with the [continental] troops under his command.

"If we act with vigor and spirit, we have nothing to fear; but if once despondency takes place, the worst consequences are to be apprehended. It is, therefore, incumbent on you to labor to keep up the spirits of the people."

In the meantime he awaited the arrival of the troops from Peekskill with impatience. On the 5th they had not appeared. "The moment they do," writes he, "I shall move with them. If they do not arrive by to-morrow, I go without them, and will

* Letter to the Hon. George Clymer.

† Schuyler's Letter Book.

do the best I can with the militia." He actually did set out at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 7th.

Such was the state of affairs in the north, of which Washington from time to time had been informed. An attack on Ticonderoga appeared to be impending; but as the garrison was in good heart, the commander resolute, and troops were on the way to reinforce him, a spirited, and perhaps successful resistance was anticipated by Washington. His surprise may therefore be imagined, on receiving a letter from Schuyler dated July 7th, conveying the astounding intelligence that Ticonderoga was evacuated!

Schuyler had just received the news at Stillwater on the Hudson, when on his way with reinforcements for the fortress. The first account was so vague that Washington hoped it might prove incorrect. It was confirmed by another letter from Schuyler, dated on the 9th at Fort Edward. A part of the garrison had been pursued by a detachment of the enemy as far as Fort Anne in that neighborhood, where the latter had been repulsed; as to St. Clair himself and the main part of his forces, they had thrown themselves into the forest, and nothing was known what had become of them!

"I am here," writes Schuyler, "at the head of a handful of men, not above fifteen hundred, with little ammunition, not above five rounds to a man, having neither balls nor lead to make any. The country is in the deepest consternation; no carriages to remove the stores from Fort George, which I expect every moment to hear is attacked; and what adds to my distress is, that a report prevails that I had given orders for the evacuation of Ticonderoga."

Washington was totally at a loss to account for St. Clair's movement. To abandon a fortress which he had recently pronounced so defensible: and to abandon it apparently without firing a gun! and then the strange uncertainty as to his subsequent fortunes, and the whereabouts of himself and the main body of his troops! "The affair," writes Washington, "is so mysterious that it baffles even conjecture."

His first attention was to supply the wants of General Schuyler. An express was sent to Springfield for musket cartridges, gunpowder, lead, and cartridge papers. Ten pieces of artillery with harness and proper officers were to be forwarded from Peekskill, as well as intrenching tools. Of tents he had none to furnish, neither could heavy cannon be spared from the defense of the Highlands.

Six hundred recruits, on their march from Massachusetts to Peekskill were ordered to repair to the reinforcement of

Schuyler; this was all the force that Washington could venture at this moment to send to his aid; but this addition to his troops, supposing those under St. Clair should have come in, and any number of militia have turned out, would probably form an army equal, if not superior, to that said to be under Burgoyne. Besides, it was Washington's idea that the latter would suspend his operations until General Howe should make a movement in concert. Supposing that movement would be an immediate attempt against the Highlands, he ordered Sullivan with his division to Peekskill to reinforce General Putnam. At the same time he advanced with his main army to Pompton, and thence to the Clove, a rugged defile through the Highlands on the west side of the Hudson. Here he encamped within eighteen miles of the river, to watch, and be at hand to oppose the designs of Sir William Howe, whatever might be their direction.

On the morning of the 14th came another letter from Schuyler, dated Fort Edward, July 10th. He had that morning received the first tidings of St. Clair and his missing troops, and of their being fifty miles east of him.

Washington hailed the intelligence with that hopeful spirit which improved every ray of light in the darkest moments. "I am happy to hear," writes he, "that General St. Clair and his army are not in the hands of the enemy. I really feared they had become prisoners. The evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence is an event of chagrin and surprise not apprehended, nor within the compass of my reasoning. . . . This stroke is severe indeed, and has distressed us much. But, notwithstanding things at present have a dark and gloomy aspect, I hope a spirited opposition will check the progress of General Burgoyne's army, and that the confidence derived from his success, will hurry him into measures that will in their consequences be favorable to us. *We should never despair. Our situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust it will again. If new difficulties arise we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times.*"

His spirit of candor and moderation is evinced in another letter. "I will not condemn or even pass censure upon any officer unheard, but I think it a duty which General St. Clair owes to his own character, to insist upon an opportunity of giving his reasons for his sudden evacuation of a post, which, but a few days before, he by his own letters, thought tenable, at least for a while. People at a distance are apt to form wrong conjectures, and if General St. Clair has good reasons for the

step he has taken, I think the sooner he justifies himself the better. I have mentioned these matters, because he may not know that his conduct is looked upon as very unaccountable by all ranks of people in this part of the country. If he is reprehensible, the public have an undoubted right to call for that justice which is due from an officer, who betrays or gives up his post in an unwarrantable manner." *

Having stated the various measures adopted by Washington for the aid of the Northern army at this critical juncture, we will leave him at his encampment in the Clove, anxiously watching the movements of the fleet and the lower army, while we turn to the north, to explain the mysterious retreat of General St. Clair.

CHAPTER XXV.

PARTICULARS OF THE EVACUATION.—INDIAN SCOUTS IN THE VICINITY OF THE FORT.—OUTPOSTS ABANDONED BY ST. CLAIR.—BURGOYNE SECURES MOUNT HOPE.—INVESTS THE FORTRESS. SEIZES AND OCCUPIES SUGAR HILL.—THE FORTS OVERLOOKED AND IN IMMINENT PERIL.—DETERMINATION TO EVACUATE.—PLAN OF RETREAT.—PART OF THE GARRISON DEPART FOR SKENESBOROUGH IN THE FLOTILLA.—ST. CLAIR CROSSES WITH THE REST TO FORT INDEPENDENCE.—A CONFLAGRATION REVEALS HIS RETREAT.—THE BRITISH CAMP AROUSED.—FRASER PURSUES ST. CLAIR.—BURGOYNE WITH HIS SQUADRON MAKES AFTER THE FLOTILLA.—PART OF THE FUGITIVES OVERTAKEN.—FLIGHT OF THE REMAINDER TO FORT ANNE.—SKIRMISH OF COLONEL LONG.—RETREAT TO FORT EDWARD.—ST. CLAIR AT CASTLETON.—ATTACK OF HIS REAR-GUARD.—FALL OF COLONEL FRANCIS.—DESERTION OF COLONEL HALE.—ST. CLAIR REACHES FORT EDWARD.—CONSTERNATION OF THE COUNTRY.—EXULTATION OF THE BRITISH.

IN the accounts given in the preceding chapter of the approach of Burgoyne to Ticonderoga, it was stated that he had encamped four miles north of the fortress, and intrenched himself. On the 2d of July, Indian scouts made their appearance in the vicinity of a blockhouse and some outworks about the strait or channel leading to Lake George. As General St. Clair did not think the garrison sufficient to defend all the outposts, these works with some adjacent saw-mills were set on fire and

* Letter to Schuyler, 18th July, 1777

abandoned. The extreme left of Ticonderoga was weak, and might easily be turned; a post had therefore been established in the preceding year, nearly half a mile in advance of the old French lines, on an eminence to the north of them. General St. Clair, through singular remissness, had neglected to secure it. Burgoyne soon discovered this neglect, and hastened to detach Generals Phillips and Fraser with a body of infantry and light artillery, to take possession of this post. They did so without opposition. Heavy guns were mounted upon it; Fraser's whole corps was stationed there; the post commanded the communication by land and water with Lake George, so as to cut off all supplies from that quarter. In fact, such were the advantages expected from this post thus neglected by St. Clair, that the British gave it the significant name of Mount Hope.

The enemy now proceeded gradually to invest Ticonderoga. A line of troops was drawn from the western part of Mount Hope round to Three Mile Point, where General Fraser was posted with the advance guard, while General Riedesel encamped with the German reserve in a parallel line, on the opposite side of Lake Champlain, at the foot of Mount Independence. For two days the enemy occupied themselves in making their advances and securing these positions, regardless of a cannonade kept up by the American batteries.

St. Clair began to apprehend that a regular siege was intended, which would be more difficult to withstand than a direct assault; he kept up a resolute aspect, however, and went about among his troops, encouraging them with the hope of a successful resistance, but enjoining incessant vigilance, and punctual attendance at the alarm posts at morning and evening roll-call.

With all the pains and expense lavished by the Americans to render these works impregnable, they had strangely neglected the master key by which they were all commanded. This was Sugar Hill, a rugged height, the termination of a mountain ridge which separates Lake Champlain from Lake George. It stood to the south of Ticonderoga, beyond the narrow channel which connected the two lakes, and rose precipitously from the waters of Champlain to the height of six hundred feet. It had been pronounced by the Americans too distant to be dangerous. Colonel Trumbull, some time an aide-de-camp to Washington, and subsequently an adjutant, had proved the contrary in the preceding year, by throwing a shot from a six-pounder in the fort nearly to the summit. It was then pronounced inaccessible to an enemy. This Trumbull had likewise proved to be an error, by clambering with Arnold and Wayne to the top, whence they perceived that a practicable

road for artillery might easily and readily be made. Trumbull had insisted that this was the true point for the fort, commanding the neighboring heights, the narrow parts of both lakes, and the communication between. A small, but strong fort here, with twenty-five heavy guns and five hundred men, would be as efficient as one hundred guns and ten thousand men on the extensive works of Ticonderoga.* His suggestions were disregarded; their wisdom was now to be proved.

The British General Phillips, on taking his position, had regarded the hill with a practiced eye. He caused it to be reconnoitered by a skillful engineer. The report was, that it overlooked, and had the entire command of Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, being about fourteen hundred yards from the former, and fifteen hundred from the latter; that the ground could be leveled for cannon, and a road cut up the defiles of the mountain in four-and-twenty hours.

Measures were instantly taken to plant a battery on that height. While the American garrisons were entirely engaged in a different direction, cannonading Mount Hope and the British lines without material effect, and without provoking a reply, the British troops were busy throughout the day and night cutting a road through rocks and trees and up rugged defiles. Guns, ammunition, and stores, all were carried up the hill in the night; the cannon were hauled up from tree to tree, and before morning the ground was leveled for the battery on which they were to be mounted. To this work, thus achieved by a *coup de main*, they gave the name of Fort Defiance.

On the 5th of July, to their astonishment and consternation, the garrison beheld a legion of red-coats on the summit of this hill, constructing works which must soon lay the fortress at their mercy.

In this sudden and appalling emergency, General St. Clair called a council of war. What was to be done? The batteries from this new fort would probably be open the next day: by that time Ticonderoga might be completely invested, and the whole garrison exposed to capture. They had not force sufficient for one half the works, and General Schuyler, supposed to be at Albany, could afford them no relief. The danger was imminent; delay might prove fatal. It was unanimously determined to evacuate both Ticonderoga and Mount Independence that very night, and retreat to Skenesborough (now Whitehall), at the upper part of the lake, about thirty miles distant, where there was a stockaded fort. The main body of the army, led by General St. Clair, were to cross to Mount Independence

* Trumbull's *Autobiography*, p. 32.

and push for Skenesborough by land, taking a circuitous route through the woods on the east side of the lake, by way of Castleton.

The cannon, stores, and provisions, together with the wounded and the women, were to be embarked on board of two hundred bateaux, and conducted to the upper extremity of the lake, by Colonel Long with six hundred men; two hundred of whom in five armed galleys were to form a rear-guard.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon; yet all the preparations were to be made for the coming night, and that with as little bustle and movement as possible; for they were overlooked by Fort Defiance, and their intentions might be suspected. Everything, therefore, was done quietly, but alertly; in the meantime, to amuse the enemy, a cannonade was kept up every half hour toward the new battery on the hill. As soon as the evening closed, and their movements could not be discovered, they began in all haste to load the boats. Such of the cannon as could not be taken were ordered to be spiked. It would not do to knock off their trunnions, lest the noise should awaken suspicions. In the hurry several were left uninjured. The lights in the garrison being previously extinguished, their tents were struck and put on board of the boats, and the women and the sick embarked. Everything was conducted with such silence and address, that, although it was a moonlight night, the flotilla departed undiscovered, and was soon under the shadows of the mountains and overhanging forests.

The retreat by land was not conducted with equal discretion and mystery. General St. Clair had crossed over the bridge to the Vermont side of the lake by three o'clock in the morning, and set forward with his advance through the woods toward Hubbardton; but, before the rear-guard under Colonel Francis got in motion, the house at Fort Independence, which had been occupied by the French General de Fermois, was set on fire—by his orders, it is said, though we are loth to charge him with such indiscretion, such gross and wanton violation of the plan of retreat. The consequences were disastrous. The British sentries at Mount Hope were astonished by a conflagration suddenly lighting up Mount Independence, and revealing the American troops in full retreat; for the rear-guard, disconcerted by this sudden exposure, pressed forward for the woods in the utmost haste and confusion.

The drums beat to arms in the British camp. Alarm guns were fired from Mount Hope: General Fraser dashed into

Ticonderoga with his pickets, giving orders for his brigade to arm in all haste and follow. By daybreak he had hoisted the British flag over the deserted fortress; before sunrise he had passed the bridge, and was in full pursuit of the American rear-guard. Burgoyne was roused from his morning slumbers on board of the frigate *Royal George*, by the alarm guns from Fort Hope, and a message from General Fraser, announcing the double retreat of the Americans by land and water. From the quarter-deck of the frigate he soon had confirmation of the news. The British colors were flying on Fort Ticonderoga, and Fraser's troops were glittering on the opposite shore.

Burgoyne's measures were prompt. General Riedesel was ordered to follow and support Fraser with a part of the German troops; garrisons were thrown into Ticonderoga and Mount Independence; the main part of the army was embarked on board of the frigates and gunboats; the floating bridge with its boom and chain, which had cost months to construct, was broken through by nine o'clock; when Burgoyne set out with his squadron in pursuit of the flotilla.

We left the latter making its retreat on the preceding evening towards Skenesborough. The lake above Ticonderoga becomes so narrow that, in those times, it was frequently called South River. Its beautiful waters wound among mountains covered with primeval forests. The bateaux, deeply laden, made their way slowly in a lengthened line; sometimes under the shadows of the mountains, sometimes in the gleam of moonlight. The rear-guard of armed galleys followed at wary distance. No immediate pursuit, however, was apprehended. The floating bridge was considered an effectual impediment to the enemy's fleet. Gayety, therefore, prevailed among the fugitives. They exulted in the secrecy and dexterity with which they had managed their retreat, and amused themselves with the idea of what would be the astonishment of the enemy at daybreak. The officers regaled merrily on the stores saved from Ticonderoga, and knocking off the necks of bottles of wine, drank a pleasant *reveille* to General Burgoyne.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the succeeding day, the heavily laden bateaux arrived at Skenesborough. The disembarkation had scarcely commenced when the thundering of artillery was heard from below. Could the enemy be at hand? It was even so. The British gun-boats having pushed on in advance of the frigates, had overtaken and were firing upon the galleys. The latter defended themselves for a while, but at length two struck, and three were blown up. The fugitives from them brought word that the British ships not being able

to come up, troops and Indians were landing from them and scrambling up the hills; intending to get in the rear of the fort and cut off all retreat.

All now was consternation and confusion. The bateaux, the storehouses, the fort, the mill were all set on fire, and a general flight took place toward Fort Anne, about twelve miles distant. Some made their way in boats up Wood Creek, a winding stream. The main body, under Colonel Long, retreated by a narrow defile cut through the woods, harassed all night by alarms that the Indians were close in pursuit. Both parties reached Fort Anne by daybreak. It was a small picketed fort, near the junction of Wood Creek and East Creek, about sixteen miles from Fort Edward. General Schuyler arrived at the latter place on the following day. The number of troops with him was inconsiderable, but, hearing of Colonel Long's situation, he immediately sent him a small reinforcement, with provisions and ammunition, and urged him to maintain his post resolutely.

On the same day Colonel Long's scouts brought in word that there were British red-coats approaching. They were in fact a regiment under Lieutenant-colonel Hill, detached from Skenesborough by Burgoyne in pursuit of the fugitives. Long sallied forth to meet them; posting himself at a rocky defile, where there was a narrow pathway along the border of Wood Creek. As the enemy advanced he opened a heavy fire upon them in front, while a part of his troops crossing and recrossing the creek, and availing themselves of their knowledge of the ground, kept up a shifting attack from the woods in flank and rear. Apprehensive of being surrounded, the British took post upon a high hill to their right, where they were warmly besieged for nearly two hours, and, according to their own account, would certainly have been forced, had not some of their Indian allies arrived and set up the much-dreaded war whoop. It was answered with three cheers by the British upon the hill. This changed the fortune of the day. The Americans had nearly expended their ammunition, and had not enough left to cope with this new enemy. They retreated, therefore, to Fort Anne, carrying with them a number of prisoners, among whom were a captain and surgeon. Supposing the troops under Colonel Hill an advance guard of Burgoyne's army, they set fire to the fort and pushed on to Fort Edward; where they gave the alarm that the main force of the enemy was close after them, and that no one knew what had become of General St. Clair and the troops who had retreated with him. We shall now clear up the mystery of his movements.

His retreat through the woods from Mount Independence continued the first day until night, when he arrived at Castleton, thirty miles from Ticonderoga. His rear-guard halted about six miles short, of Hubbardton, to await the arrival of stragglers. It was composed of three regiments under colonels Seth Warner, Frances, and Hale; in all about thirteen hundred men.

Early the next morning, a sultry morning of July, while they were taking their breakfast, they were startled by the report of fire-arms. Their sentries had discharged their muskets, and came running in with word that the enemy were at hand.

It was General Fraser, with his advance of eight hundred and fifty men, who had pressed forward in the latter part of the night, and now attacked the Americans with great spirit, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers; in fact, he expected to be promptly reinforced by Riedesel and his Germans. The Americans met the British with great spirit; but at the very commencement of the action, Colonel Hale, with a detachment placed under his command to protect the rear, gave way, leaving Warner and Francis with but seven hundred men to bear the brunt of the battle. These posted themselves behind logs and trees in "backwoods" style, whence they kept up a destructive fire, and were evidently gaining the advantage, when General Reidesel came pressing into the action with his German troops, drums beating and colors flying. There was now an impetuous charge with the bayonet. Colonel Francis was among the first who fell, gallantly fighting at the head of his men. The Americans, thinking the whole German force upon them, gave way and fled, leaving the ground covered with their dead and wounded. Many others who had been wounded perished in the woods, where they had taken refuge. Their whole loss in killed, wounded and taken, was upwards of three hundred; that of the enemy one hundred and eighty-three. Several officers were lost on both sides. Among those wounded of the British was Major Ackland of the grenadiers, of whose further fortunes in the war we shall have to speak hereafter.

The noise of the firing when the action commenced had reached General St. Clair at Castleton. He immediately sent orders to two militia regiments which were in his rear, and within two miles of the battle-ground, to hasten to the assistance of his rear-guard. They refused to obey, and hurried forward to Castleton. At this juncture St. Clair received information of Burgoyne's arrival at Skenesborough, and the destruction of the American works there: fearing to be intercepted at Fort Anne, he immediately changed his route, struck into the woods on his

left, and directed his march to Rutland, leaving word for Warner to follow him. The latter overtook him two days afterwards, with his shattered force reduced to ninety men. As to Colonel Hale, who had pressed towards Castleton at the beginning of the action, he and his men were overtaken the same day by the enemy, and the whole party captured, without making any fight. It has been alleged in his excuse, with apparent justice, that he and a large portion of his men were in feeble health, and unfit for action; for his own part, he died while yet a prisoner, and never had the opportunity which he sought, to vindicate himself before a court-martial.

On the 12th St. Clair reached Fort Edward, his troops haggard and exhausted by their long retreat through the woods. Such is the story of the catastrophe at Fort Ticonderoga, which caused so much surprise and concern to Washington, and of the seven days' mysterious disappearance of St. Clair, which kept every one in the most painful suspense.

The loss of artillery, ammunition, provisions, and stores, in consequence of the evacuation of these northern posts, was prodigious; but the worst effect was the consternation spread throughout the country. A panic prevailed at Albany, the people running about as if distracted, sending off their goods and furniture.* The great barriers of the North, it was said, were broken through, and there was nothing to check the triumphant career of the enemy.

The invading army, both officers and men, according to a British writer of the time, "were highly elated with their fortune, and deemed that and their prowess to be irresistible. They regarded their enemy with the greatest contempt, and considered their own toils to be nearly at an end, and Albany already in their hands."

In England, too, according to the same author, the joy and exultation were extreme; not only at court, but with all those who hoped or wished the unqualified subjugation and unconditional submission of the colonies. "The loss in reputation was greater to the Americans," adds he, "and capable of more fatal consequences, than that of ground, of posts, of artillery, or of men. All the contemptuous and most degrading charges which had been made by their enemies, of their wanting the resolution and abilities of men, even in defense of what was dear to them, were now repeated and believed." . . . "It was not difficult to diffuse an opinion that the war, in effect, was over, and that any further resistance would render the terms of their submission worse. Such," he concludes, "were some

* MS. Letter of Richard Varick to Schuyler.

of the immediate effects of the loss of those grand keys of North America, Ticonderoga and the lakes." *

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAPTURE OF GENERAL PRESCOTT.—PROFFERED IN EXCHANGE FOR LEE.—REINFORCEMENTS TO SCHUYLER.—ARNOLD SENT TO THE NORTH.—EASTERN MILITIA TO REPAIR TO SARATOGA.—FURTHER REINFORCEMENTS.—GENERALS LINCOLN AND ARNOLD RECOMMENDED FOR PARTICULAR SERVICE.—WASHINGTON'S MEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN.—BRITISH FLEET PUTS TO SEA.—CONJECTURES AS TO ITS DESTINATION.—A FEIGNED LETTER.—APPEARANCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF THE FLEET.—ORDERS AND COUNTER-ORDERS OF WASHINGTON.—ENCAMPS AT GERMANTOWN.—ANXIETY FOR THE SECURITY OF THE HIGHLANDS.—GEORGE CLINTON ON GUARD.—CALL ON CONNECTICUT

A SPIRITED exploit to the eastward was performed during the prevalence of adverse news from the North. General Prescott had command of the British forces in Rhode Island. His harsh treatment of Colonel Ethan Allen, and his haughty and arrogant conduct on various occasions, had rendered him peculiarly odious to the Americans. Lieutenant-colonel Barton, who was stationed with a force of Rhode Island militia on the mainland, received word that Prescott was quartered at a country house near the western shore of the island, about four miles from Newport, totally unconscious of danger, though in a very exposed situation. He determined, if possible, to surprise and capture him. Forty resolute men joined him in the enterprise. Embarking at night in two boats at Warwick Neck, they pulled quietly across the bay with muffled oars, undiscovered by the ships of war and guard-boats; landed in silence; eluded the vigilance of the guard stationed near the house; captured the sentry at the door, and surprised the general in his bed. His aide-de-camp leaped from the window, but was likewise taken. Colonel Barton returned with equal silence and address, and arrived safe at Warwick with his prisoners. A sword was voted to him by Congress, and he received a colonel's commission in the regular army.

Washington hailed the capture of Prescott as a peculiarly

* *Hist. Civil War in America*, vol. i. p. 283.

fortunate circumstance, furnishing him with an equivalent for General Lee. He accordingly wrote to Sir William Howe, proposing the exchange. "This proposition," writes he, "being agreeable to the letter and spirit of the agreement subsisting between us, will, I hope, have your approbation. I am the more induced to expect it, as it will not only remove one ground of controversy between us, but in its consequences effect the exchanges of Lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, for a like number of ours of equal rank in your possession."

No immediate reply was received to this letter, Sir William Howe being at sea; in the meantime Prescott remained in duration. "I would have him genteelly accommodated, but strongly guarded," writes Washington. "I would not admit him to parole, as General Howe has not thought proper to grant General Lee that indulgence." *

Washington continued his anxious exertions to counteract the operations of the enemy; forwarding artillery and ammunition to Schuyler, with all the camp furniture that could be spared from his own encampment and from Peekskill. A part of Nixon's brigade was all the reinforcement he could afford in his present situation. "To weaken this army more than is prudent," writes he, "would perhaps bring destruction upon it, and I look upon the keeping it upon a respectable footing as the only means of preventing a junction of Howe's and Burgoyne's armies, which, if effected, may have the most fatal consequences."

Schuyler had earnestly desired the assistance of an active officer well acquainted with the country. Washington sent him Arnold. "I need not," writes he, "enlarge upon his well known activity, conduct, and bravery. The proofs he has given of all these have gained him the confidence of the public and of the army, the Eastern troops in particular."

The question of rank, about which Arnold was so tenacious, was yet unsettled, and though, had his promotion been regular, he would have been superior in command to General St. Clair, he assured Washington that, on the present occasion, his claim should create no dispute.

Schuyler, in the meantime, aided by Kosciuszko the Pole, who was engineer in his department, had selected two positions on Moses Creek, four miles below Fort Edward; where the troops which had retreated from Ticonderoga, and part of the militia, were throwing up works.

To impede the advance of the enemy, he had caused trees to

* Letter to Governor Trumbull. *Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. i, Sparks.

be felled into Wood Creek, so as to render it unnavigable, and the roads between Fort Edward and Fort Anne to be broken up; the cattle in that direction to be brought away, and the forage destroyed. He had drawn off the garrison from Fort George, who left the buildings in flames. "Strengthened by that garrison, who are in good health," writes he, "and if the militia, who are here, or an equal number, can be prevailed on to stay, and the enemy give me a few days more, which I think they will be obliged to do, I shall not be apprehensive that they will be able to force the posts I am about to occupy."

Washington cheered on his faithful coadjutor. His reply to Schuyler (July 22d) was full of that confident hope, founded on sagacious forecast, with which he was prone to animate his generals in times of doubt and difficulty. "Though our affairs for some days past have worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I yet look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check, and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which, of all others, is most favorable to us; I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, supposing it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspire the people, and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard to their own security, they would fly to arms and ford every aid in their power."

While he thus suggested bold enterprises, he cautioned Schuyler not to repose too much confidence in the works he was projecting, so as to collect in them a large quantity of stores. "I begin to consider lines as a kind of trap," writes he, "and not to answer the valuable purposes expected from them, unless they are in passes which cannot be avoided by the enemy."

In circulars addressed to the brigadier-generals of militia in the western parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut, he warned them that the evacuation of Ticonderoga had opened a door by which the enemy, unless vigorously opposed, might penetrate the northern part of the State of New York, and the western parts of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and, forming a junction with General Howe, cut off the communication between the Eastern and Northern States. "It cannot be supposed," adds he, "that the small number of continental troops assembled at Fort Edward, is alone sufficient to check the pro-

gress of the enemy. To the militia, therefore, must we look for support in this time of trial; and I trust that you will immediately upon receipt of this, if you have not done it already, march with at least one third of the militia under your command, and rendezvous at Saratoga, unless directed to some other place by General Schuyler or General Arnold."

Washington now ordered that all the vessels and river craft, not required at Albany, should be sent down to New Windsor and Fishkill, and kept in readiness; for he knew not how soon the movements of General Howe might render it suddenly necessary to transport part of his forces up the Hudson.

Further letters from Schuyler urged the increasing exigencies of his situation. It was harvest time. The militia, impatient at being detained from their rural labors, were leaving him in great numbers. In a council of general officers, it had been thought advisable to give leave of absence to half, lest the whole should depart. He feared those who remained would do so but a few days. The enemy were steadily employed cutting a road toward him from Skenesborough. From the number of horse they were reported to have, and to expect, they might intend to bring their provisions on horseback. If so, they would be able to move with expedition. In this position of affairs, he urged to be reinforced as speedily as possible.

Washington, in reply, informed him that he had ordered a further reinforcement of General Glover's brigade, which was all he could possibly furnish in his own exigencies. He trusted affairs with Schuyler would soon wear a more smiling aspect, that the Eastern States, who were so deeply concerned in the matter, would exert themselves, by effectual succor, to enable him to check the progress of the enemy, and repel a danger by which they were immediately threatened. From the information he had received, he supposed the force of the enemy to be little more than five thousand. "They seem," said he, "to be unprovided with wagons to transport the immense quantity of baggage and warlike apparatus, without which they cannot pretend to penetrate the country. You mention their having a great number of horses, but they must nevertheless require a considerable number of wagons, as there are many things which cannot be transported on horses. They can never think of advancing without securing their rear, and the force with which they can act against you, will be greatly reduced by detachments necessary for that purpose; and as they have to cut out their passage, and to remove the impediments you have thrown in their way, before they can proceed, this circumstance, with the encumbrance they must feel in their baggage, stores,

etc., will inevitably retard their march, and give you leisure and opportunity to prepare a good reception for them. . . . I have directed General Lincoln to repair to you as speedily as the state of his health, which is not very perfect, will permit; this gentleman has always supported the character of a judicious, brave, active officer, and he is exceedingly popular in the State of Massachusetts, to which he belongs; he will have a degree of influence over the militia which cannot fail of being highly advantageous. I have intended him more particularly for the command of the militia, and I promise myself it will have a powerful tendency to make them turn out with more cheerfulness, and to inspire them with perseverance to remain in the field, and with fortitude and spirit to do their duty while in it." *

Washington highly approved of a measure suggested by Schuyler, of stationing a body of troops somewhere about the Hampshire Grants (Vermont), so as to be in the rear or on the flank of Burgoyne, should he advance. It would make the latter, he said, very circumspect in his advances, if it did not entirely prevent them. It would keep him in continual anxiety for his rear, and oblige him to leave the posts behind him much stronger than he would otherwise do. He advised that General Lincoln should have the command of the corps thus posted, "as no person could be more proper for it."

He recommended, moreover, that in case the enemy should make any formidable movement in the neighborhood of Fort Schuyler (Stanwix), on the Mohawk River, General Arnold, or some other sensible, spirited officer, should be sent to take charge of that post, keep up the spirits of the inhabitants, and cultivate and improve the favorable disposition of the Indians.

The reader will find in the sequel what a propitious effect all these measures had upon the fortunes of the Northern campaign, and with what admirable foresight Washington calculated all its chances. Due credit must also be given to the sagacious counsels and executive energy of Schuyler; who suggested some of the best moves in the campaign, and carried them vigorously into action. Never was Washington more ably and loyally seconded by any of his generals.

But now the attention of the commander-in-chief is called to the seaboard. On the 23d of July, the fleet, so long the object of watchful solicitude, actually put to sea. The force embarked, according to subsequent accounts, consisted of thirty-six British and Hessian battalions, including the light infantry and grenadiers, with a powerful artillery; a New York corps of provin-

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

cials, or royalists, called the Queen's Rangers, and a regiment of light horse; between fifteen and eighteen thousand men in all. The force left with General Sir Henry Clinton for the protection of New York, consisted of seventeen battalions, a regiment of light horse, and the remainder of the provincial corps.*

The destination of the fleet was still a matter of conjecture. Just after it had sailed, a young man presented himself at one of General Putnam's outposts. He had been a prisoner in New York, he said, but had received his liberty and a large reward on undertaking to be the bearer of a letter from General Howe to Burgoyne. This letter his feelings of patriotism prompted him to deliver up to General Putnam. The letter was immediately transmitted by the general to Washington. It was in the handwriting of Howe, and bore his signature. In it he informed Burgoyne, that instead of any designs up the Hudson, he was bound to the east against Boston. "If," said he, "according to my expectations, we may succeed in getting possession of it, I shall, without loss of time, proceed to coöperate with you in the defeat of the rebel army opposed to you. Clinton is sufficiently strong to amuse Washington and Putnam. I am now making demonstrations to the southward, which I think will have the full effect in carrying our plan into execution."

Washington at once pronounced the letter a feint. "No stronger proof could be given," said he, "that Howe is not going to the eastward. The letter was evidently intended to fall into our hands. If there were not too great a risk of the dispersion of their fleet, I should think their putting to sea a mere manœuvre to deceive, and the North River still their object. I am persuaded, more than ever, that Philadelphia is the place of destination."

He now set out with his army for the Delaware, ordering Sullivan and Stirling with their divisions to cross the Hudson from Peekskill, and proceed towards Philadelphia. Every movement and order showed his doubt and perplexity, and the circumspection with which he had to proceed. On the 30th, he writes from Coryell's Ferry, about thirty miles from Philadelphia, to General Gates, who was in that city: "As we are yet uncertain as to the real destination of the enemy, though the Delaware seems the most probable, I have thought it prudent to halt the army at this place, Howell's Ferry, and Trenton, at least till the fleet actually enters the bay and puts the matter beyond a doubt. From hence we can be on the proper

ground to oppose them before they can possibly make their arrangements and dispositions for an attack. . . . That the post in the Highlands may not be left too much exposed, I have ordered General Sullivan's division to halt at Morristown, whence it will march southward if there should be occasion, or northward upon the first advice that the enemy should be throwing any force up the North River. General Howe's in a manner abandoning General Burgoyne, is so unaccountable a matter, that, till I am fully assured it is so, *I cannot help casting my eyes continually behind me.* As I shall pay no regard to any flying reports of the appearance of the fleet, I shall expect an account of it from you, the moment you have ascertained it to your satisfaction."

On the 31st, he was informed that the enemy's fleet of two hundred and twenty-eight sail had arrived the day previous at the Capes of Delaware. He instantly wrote to Putnam to hurry on two brigades, which had crossed the river, and to let Schuyler and the commanders in the Eastern States know that they had nothing to fear from Howe, and might bend all their forces, continental and militia, against Burgoyne. In the meantime he moved his camp to Germantown, about six miles from Philadelphia to be at hand for the defense of that city.

The very next day came word, by express, that the fleet had again sailed out of the Capes, and apparently shaped its course eastward. "This surprising event gives me the greatest anxiety," writes he to Putnam (August 1), "and unless every possible exertion is made, may be productive of the happiest consequences to the enemy and the most injurious to us. . . . The importance of preventing Mr. Howe's getting possession of the Highlands by a *coup de main*, is infinite to America; and, in the present situation of things, every effort that can be thought of must be used. The probability of his going to the eastward is exceedingly small, and the ill effects that might attend such a step inconsiderable in comparison with those that would inevitably attend a successful stroke on the Highlands."

Under this impression Washington sent orders to Sullivan to hasten back with his division and the two brigades which had recently left Peekskill and to recross the Hudson to that post as speedily as possible, intending to forward the rest of the army with all the expedition in his power. He wrote, also, to General George Clinton, to reinforce Putnam with as many of the New York militia as could be collected. Clinton, be it observed, had just been installed governor of the State of New York—the first person elevated to that office under the constitution. He still continued in actual command of the militia of

the State, and it was with great satisfaction that Washington subsequently learnt he had determined to resume the command of Fort Montgomery in the Highlands: "There cannot be a more proper man," writes he, "on every account."

Washington, moreover, requested Putnam to send an express to Governor Trumbull, urging assistance from the militia of his State without a moment's loss of time. "Connecticut cannot be in more danger through any channel than this, and every motive of its own interest and the general good demands its utmost endeavors to give you effectual assistance. Governor Trumbull will, I trust, be sensible of this.

And here we take occasion to observe, that there could be no surer reliance for aid in time of danger than the patriotism of Governor Trumbull; nor were there men more ready to obey a sudden appeal to arms than the yeomanry of Connecticut; however much their hearts might subsequently yearn toward the farms and firesides they had so promptly abandoned. No portion of the Union was more severely tasked, throughout the Revolution, for military services; and Washington avowed, when the great struggle was over, that, "if all the states had done their duty as well as the little State of Connecticut, the war would have been ended long ago." *

CHAPTER XXVII.

GATES ON THE ALERT FOR A COMMAND.—SCHUYLER UNDERMINED IN CONGRESS.—PUT ON HIS GUARD.—COURTS A SCRUTINY, BUT NOT BEFORE AN EXPECTED ENGAGEMENT.—SUMMONED WITH ST. CLAIR TO HEAD-QUARTERS.—GATES APPOINTED TO THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT.—WASHINGTON'S SPECULATIONS ON THE SUCCESSES OF BURGOYNE.—ILL-JUDGED MEDDLINGS OF CONGRESS WITH THE COMMISSARIAT.—COLONEL TRUMBULL RESIGNS IN CONSEQUENCE.

WE have cited in a preceding page a letter from Washington to Gates at Philadelphia, requiring his vigilant attention to the movements of the enemy's fleet; that ambitious officer, however, was engrossed at the time by matters more important to his individual interests. The command of the Northern department seemed again within his reach. The evacuation of Ticonderoga had been imputed by many either to cowardice or treachery on the part of General St. Clair, and the enemies of

* Communicated by Professor B. Silliman.

Schuyler had, for some time past, been endeavoring to involve him in the disgrace of the transaction. It is true he was absent from the fortress at the time, zealously engaged, as we have shown, in procuring and forwarding reinforcements and supplies; but it was alleged that the fort had been evacuated by his order, and that, while there, he had made such dispositions as plainly indicated an intention to deliver it to the enemy. In the eagerness to excite popular feelings against him, old slanders were revived, and the failure of the invasion of Canada, and all the subsequent disasters in that quarter, were again laid to his charge as commanding general of the Northern department. "In short," writes Schuyler in one of his letters, "every art is made use of to destroy that confidence which it is so essential the army should have in its general officers, and this too by people pretending to be friends to the country."*

These charges, which for some time existed merely in popular clamor, had recently been taken up in Congress, and a strong demonstration had been made against him by some of the New England delegates. "Your enemies in this quarter," writes his friend, the Hon. William Duer (July 29th), "are leaving no means unessayed to blast your character, and to impute to your appointment in that department a loss which, rightly investigated, can be imputed to very different causes.

"Be not surprised if you should be desired to attend Congress, to give an account of the loss of Ticonderoga. With respect to the result of the inquiry I am under no apprehensions. Like gold tried in the fire, I trust that you, my dear friend, will be found more pure and bright than ever. . . . From the nature of your department, and other unavoidable causes, you have not had an opportunity, during the course of this war, of evincing that spirit which I and your more intimate friends know you to possess: of this circumstance prejudice takes a cruel advantage, and malice lends an easy ear to her dictates. A hint on this subject is sufficient. You will not, I am sure, see this place till your conduct gives the lie to this insinuation, as it has done before to every other which your enemies have so industriously circulated."*

Schuyler, in reply, expressed the most ardent wish that Congress would order him to attend and give an account of his conduct. He wished his friends to push for the closest scrutiny, confident that it would redound to his honor. "I would not, however, wish the scrutiny to take place immediately," adds he, "as we shall probably soon have an engagement, if we are so

* Schuyler to Governor Trumbull. Letter Book.

† Schuyler's Papers.

reinforced with militia as to give us a probable chance of success. . . . Be assured, my dear friend, if a general engagement takes place, whatever may be the event, you will not have occasion to blush for your friend." *

It seemed to be the object of Mr. Schuyler's enemies to forestall his having such a chance of distinguishing himself. The business was pushed in Congress more urgently than even Mr. Duer had anticipated. Besides the allegations against him in regard to Ticonderoga, his unpopularity in the Eastern States was urged as a sufficient reason for discontinuing him in his present command, as the troops from that quarter were unwilling to serve under him. This had a great effect in the present time of peril, with several of the delegates from the East, who discredited the other charges against him. The consequence was, that after long and ardent debates, in which some of the most eminent delegates from New York, who intimately knew his worth, stood up in his favor, it was resolved (August 1st) that both General Schuyler and General St. Clair should be summoned to head-quarters to account for the misfortunes in the North, and that Washington should be directed to order such general officer as he should think proper to succeed General Schuyler in the command of the Northern department.

The very next day a letter was addressed to Washington by several of the leading Eastern members, men of unquestionable good faith, such as Samuel and John Adams, urging the appointment of Gates. "No man, in our opinion," said they, "will be more likely to restore harmony, order, and discipline, and retrieve our affairs in that quarter. He has, on experience, acquired the confidence and stands high in the esteem of the Eastern troops." Washington excused himself from making any nomination, alleging that the Northern department had, in a great measure, been considered a separate one; that, moreover, the situation of the department was delicate, and might involve interesting and delicate consequences. The nomination, therefore, was made by Congress; the Eastern influence prevailed, and Gates received the appointment, so long the object of his aspirations, if not intrigues.

Washington deeply regretted the removal of a noble-hearted man, with whom he had acted so harmoniously, whose exertions had been so energetic and unwearied, and who was so peculiarly fitted for the varied duties of the department. He consoled himself, however, with the thought that the excuse of want of confidence in the general officers, hitherto alleged by

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

the Eastern States for withholding reinforcements, would be obviated by the presence of this man of their choice.

With the prevalent wisdom of his pen, he endeavored to allay the distrusts and apprehensions awakened by the misfortune at Ticonderoga, which he considered the worst consequence of that event. "If the matter were coolly and dispassionately considered," writes he to the Council of Safety of the State of New York, "there would be nothing found so formidable in General Burgoyne and the force under him, with all his successes, to countenance the least degree of despondency; and experience would show, that even the moderate exertions of the States more immediately interested, would be sufficient to check his career, and, perhaps, convert the advantages he has gained to his ruin. . . . If I do not give so effectual aid as I could wish to the Northern army, it is not from want of inclination, nor from being too little impressed with the importance of doing it; but because the state of affairs in this quarter will not possibly admit of it. It would be the height of impolicy to weaken ourselves too much here, in order to increase our strength there; and it must certainly be considered more difficult, as well as of greater moment, to control the main army of the enemy, than an inferior, and, I may say, dependent one; for it is pretty obvious that if General Howe can be kept at bay, and prevented from effecting his purposes, the successes of General Burgoyne, whatever they may be, must be partial and temporary."

The sagacity and foresight of his policy will be manifested by after events.

On the same day on which the above letter was written, he officially announced to Gates his appointment, and desired him to proceed immediately to the place of his destination: wishing him success, and that he "might speedily be able to restore the face of affairs in that quarter."

About this time took effect a measure of Congress, making a complete change in the commissariat. This important and complicated department had hitherto been under the management of one commissary-general, Colonel Joseph Trumbull of Connecticut. By the new arrangement there were to be two commissary-generals, one of purchases, the other of issues; each to be appointed by Congress. They were to have several deputy commissaries under them, but accountable to Congress, and to be appointed and removed by that body. These, and many subordinate arrangements, had been adopted in opposition to the opinion of Washington, and, most unfortunately, were brought into operation in the midst of this perplexed and critical campaign.

Their first effect was to cause the resignation of Colonel Trumbull, who had been nominated commissary of purchases; and the entrance into office of a number of inexperienced men. The ultimate effect was to paralyze the organization of this vital department; to cause delay and confusion in furnishing and forwarding supplies; and to retard and embarrass the operations of the different armies throughout the year. Washington had many dangers and difficulties to harass and perplex him throughout this complicated campaign, and not among the least may be classed the "stumblings of Congress."

NOTE.

An author, eminent for his historical researches, expresses himself at a loss to explain the prejudice existing against General Schuyler among the people of the New England States. "There was not an individual connected with the Revolution," observes he, "concerning whom there is more abundant evidence of his patriotism and unwearied services in the cause of his country."

Wilkinson, at that time a devoted follower of Gates, and likely to know the influences that operated against his rival, traces this prejudice up to times prior to the Revolution, when Schuyler acted as commissioner on the part of New York in settling the partition line between that colony and Massachusetts Bay. This gave rise to the feuds and controversies concerning the Hampshire Grants, in which, according to Wilkinson, the parties were distinguished by the designations of Yankee and Yorker. The zealous exertions of Schuyler on behalf of New York, gained him the ill will of the Hampshire grantees, and of eastern men of the first rank with whom he came in collision. This feeling survived the controversy, and existed among the militia from those parts. On the other hand, Wilkinson observes, "It was General Gates' policy to favor the views of the inhabitants of the Hampshire Grants, which made him popular with these people."

Somewhat of the prejudice against Schuyler Wilkinson ascribes to social habits and manners, "those of New England at the time being democratic and puritanical, whilst in New York they were courtly and aristocratical." Schuyler was a man of the world, and of society, cultivated, and well bred; he was an élève too of Major-general Bradstreet in the seven years' war; and had imbibed notions of military carriage and decorum in an aristocratic school; all this rendered him impatient at times of the deficiencies in these respects among the raw militia officers, and made the latter consider him haughty and reserved.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WASHINGTON'S PERPLEXITIES ABOUT THE BRITISH FLEET—PUTNAM AND GOVERNOR CLINTON PUT ON THE ALERT IN THE HIGHLANDS.—MORGAN AND HIS RIFLEMEN SENT TO THE NORTH.—WASHINGTON AT PHILADELPHIA.—HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH LAFAYETTE.—INTELLIGENCE ABOUT THE FLEET.—EXPLANATIONS OF ITS MOVEMENTS.—REVIEW OF THE ARMY.—LAFAYETTE MISTAKES THE NATURE OF HIS COMMISSION.—HIS ALLIANCE WITH WASHINGTON.—MARCH OF THE ARMY THROUGH PHILADELPHIA.—ENCAMPMENT AT WILMINGTON.

FOR several days Washington remained at Germantown in painful uncertainty about the British fleet; whether gone to the south or to the east. The intense heat of the weather made him unwilling again to move his army, already excessively harassed by marchings and counter-marchings. Concluding, at length, that the fleet had actually gone to the east, he was once more on the way to recross the Delaware, when an express overtook him on the 10th of August, with tidings that three days before it had been seen off Sinepuxent Inlet, about sixteen leagues south of the Capes of Delaware.

Again he came to a halt, and waited for further intelligence. Danger suggested itself from a different quarter. Might it not be Howe's plan, by thus appearing with his ships at different places, to lure the army after him, and thereby leave the country open for Sir Henry Clinton with the troops at New York to form a junction with Burgoyne? With this idea Washington wrote forthwith to the veteran Putnam to be on the alert; collect all the force he could to strengthen his post at Peekskill, and send down spies to ascertain whether Sir Henry Clinton was actually at New York, and what troops he had there. "If he has the number of men with him that is reported," observes Washington, "it is probably with the intention to attack you from below, while Burgoyne comes down upon you from above."

The old general, whose boast it was that he never slept but with one eye, was already on the alert. A circumstance had given him proof positive that Sir Henry was in New York, and

had roused his military ire. A spy, sent by that commander, had been detected furtively collecting information of the force and condition of the post at Peekskill, and had undergone a military trial. A vessel of war came up the Hudson in all haste, and landed a flag of truce at Verplanck's Point, by which a message was transmitted to Putnam from Sir Henry Clinton, claiming Edmund Palmer as a lieutenant in the British service.

The reply of the old general was brief but emphatic.

“HEAD-QUARTERS, 7th. Aug., 1777.

“Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service was taken as a spy lurking within our lines; he has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy: and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

“ISRAEL PUTNAM.

“P. S.—He has, accordingly, been executed.”

Governor Clinton, the other guardian of the Highlands, and actually at his post at Fort Montgomery, was equally on the alert. He had faithfully followed Washington's directions, in ordering out militia from different counties to reinforce his own garrison and the army under Schuyler. “I never knew the militia come out with greater alacrity,” writes he: “but, as many of them have yet a great part of their harvests in the field, I fear it will be difficult to detain them long, unless the enemy will make some movements that indicate a design of coming this way suddenly, and so obvious as to be believed by the militia.”

At the same time, the worthy governor expressed his surprise that the Northern army had not been reinforced from the eastward. “The want of confidence in the general officers to the northward,” adds he, “is the specious reason. To me it appears a very weak one. Common gratitude to a sister State, as well as duty to the continent at large, conspire in calling on our eastern neighbors to step forth on this occasion.”

One measure more was taken by Washington, during this interval, in aid of the northern department. The Indians who accompanied Burgoyne were objects of great dread to the American troops, especially the militia. As a counterpoise to them, he now sent up Colonel Morgan with five hundred riflemen to fight them in their own way. “They are all chosen men,” said he, “selected from the army at large, and well acquainted with the use of rifles and with that mode of fighting. I expect the

most eminent services from them, and I shall be mistaken if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages." It was, indeed, an arm of strength, which he could but ill spare from his own army.

Putnam was directed to have sloops ready to transport them up the Hudson, and Gates was informed of their being on the way, and about what time he might expect them, as well as two regiments from Peekskill, under Colonels Van Courtlandt and Livingston.

"With these reinforcements, besides the militia under General Lincoln," writes Washington to Gates, "I am in hopes you will find yourself at least equal to stop the progress of Mr. Burgoyne, and, by cutting off his supplies of provisions, to render his situation very ineligible." Washington was thus, in a manner, carrying on two games at once, with Howe on the sea-board and with Burgoyne on the upper waters of the Hudson, and endeavoring by skillful movements to give check to both. It was an arduous and complicated task, especially with his scanty and fluctuating means, and the wide extent of country and great distances over which he had to move his men.

His measures to throw a force in the rear of Burgoyne were now in a fair way of being carried into effect. Lincoln was at Bennington. Stark had joined him with a body of New Hampshire militia, and a corps of Massachusetts militia was arriving. "Such a force in his rear," observed Washington, "will oblige Burgoyne to leave such strong posts behind as must make his main body very weak, and extremely capable of being repulsed by the force we have in front."

During his encampment in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, Washington was repeatedly at that city, making himself acquainted with the military capabilities of the place and its surrounding country, and directing the construction of fortifications on the river. In one of these visits he became acquainted with the young Marquis de Lafayette, who had recently arrived from France, in company with a number of French, Polish, and German officers, among whom was the Baron de Kalb. The marquis was not quite twenty years of age, yet had already been married nearly three years to a lady of rank and fortune. Full of the romance of liberty, he had torn himself from his youthful bride, turned his back upon the gayeties and splendors of a court, and in defiance of impediments and difficulties multiplied in his path, had made his way to America to join its hazardous fortunes.

He sent in his letters of recommendation to Mr. Lovell, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs; and applied the

next day at the door of Congress to know his success. Mr. Lovell came forth, and gave him but little encouragement; Congress, in fact, was embarrassed by the number of foreign applications, many without merit. Lafayette immediately sent in the following note: "After my sacrifices, I have the right to ask two favors; one is to serve at my own expense; the other, to commence by serving as a volunteer."*

This simple appeal had its effect: it called attention to his peculiar case, and Congress resolved on the 31st of July, that in consideration of his zeal, his illustrious family and connections, he should have the rank of major-general in the army of the United States.

It was at a public dinner, where a number of members of Congress were present, that Lafayette first saw Washington. He immediately knew him, he said, from the officers who surrounded him, by his commanding air and person. When the party was breaking up, Washington took him aside, complimented him in a gracious manner on his disinterested zeal and the generosity of his conduct, and invited him to make headquarters his home. "I cannot promise you the luxuries of a court," said he, "but as you have become an American soldier, you will, doubtless, accommodate yourself to the fare of an American army."

Many days had now elapsed without further tidings of the fleet. What had become of it? Had Howe gone against Charleston? If so, the distance was too great to think of following him. Before the army, debilitated and wasted by a long march, under a summer sun, in an unhealthy climate, could reach there, he might accomplish every purpose he had in view, and reëmbark his troops to turn his arms against Philadelphia, or any other point, without the army being at hand to oppose him.

What, under these uncertainties, was to be done? Remain inactive, in the remote probability of Howe's returning this way; or proceed to the Hudson with a view either to oppose Burgoyne, or make an attempt upon New York? A successful stroke with respect to either, might make up for any losses sustained in the South. The latter was unanimously determined in a council of war, in which the Marquis Lafayette took part. As it was, however, a movement that might involve the most important consequences, Washington sent his aide-de-camp, Colonel Alexander Hamilton, with a letter to the President of Congress, requesting the opinion of that body. Congress approved the decision of the council, and the army was

* *Memoires du Gen. Lafayette*, tom. i, p. 19.

about to be put in march, when all these tormenting uncertainties were brought to an end by intelligence that the fleet had actually entered the Chesapeake, and anchored at Swan Point, at least two hundred miles within the capes. "By General Howe's coming so far up the Chesapeake," writes Washington, "he must mean to reach Philadelphia by that route, though to be sure it is a strange one."

The mystery of these various appearances and vanishings, which had caused so much wonder and perplexity, is easily explained. Shortly before putting to sea with the ships of war, Howe had sent a number of transports, and a ship cut down as a floating battery, up the Hudson, which had induced Washington to despatch troops to the Highlands. After putting to sea, the fleet was a week in reaching the Capes of Delaware. When there, the commanders were deterred from entering the river by reports of measures taken to obstruct its navigation. It was then determined to make for Chesapeake Bay, and approach, in that way, as near as possible to Philadelphia. Contrary winds, however, kept them for a long time from getting into the bay.

Lafayette, in his memoirs, describes a review of Washington's army which he witnessed about this time. "Eleven thousand men, but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, presented," he said, "a singular spectacle; in this parti-colored and often naked state, the best dresses were hunting shirts of brown linen. Their tactics were equally irregular. They were arranged without regard to size, excepting that the smallest men were the front rank; with all this, there were good-looking soldiers conducted by zealous officers."

"We ought to feel embarrassed," said Washington to him, "in presenting ourselves before an officer just from the French army."

"It is to learn, and not to instruct, that I come here," was Lafayette's apt and modest reply; and it gained him immediate popularity.

The marquis, however, had misconceived the nature of his appointment; his commission was merely honorary, but he had supposed it given with a view to the command of a division of the army. This misconception on his part caused Washington some embarrassment. The marquis, with his characteristic vivacity and ardor, was eager for immediate employ. He admitted that he was young and inexperienced, but always accompanied the admission with the assurance that, so soon as Washington should think him fit for the command of a division, he would be ready to enter upon the duties of it, and, in the meantime, offered his services for a smaller command. "What

the designs of congress respecting this gentleman are, and what line of conduct I am to pursue to comply with their design and his expectations," writes Washington, "I know not, and beg to be instructed."

"The numberless applications for employment by foreigners under their respective appointments," continues he, "add no small embarrassment to a command, which, without it, is abundantly perplexed by the different tempers I have to do with, and the different modes which the respective States have pursued in nominating and arranging their officers; *the combination of all is but too just a representation of a great chaos, from whence we are endeavoring, how successfully time only can show, to draw some regularity and order.*" * How truly is here depicted one of the great difficulties of his command, continually tasking his equity and equanimity. In the present instance it was intimated to Washington, that he was not bound by the tenor of Lafayette's commission to give him a command; but was at liberty to follow his own judgment in the matter. This still left him in a delicate situation, with respect to the marquis, whose prepossessing manners and self-sacrificing zeal inspired regard; but whose extreme youth and inexperience necessitated caution. Lafayette, however, from the first attached himself to Washington with an affectionate reverence, the sincerity of which could not be mistaken, and soon won his way into a heart, which, with all its apparent coldness, was naturally confiding, and required sympathy and friendship; and it is a picture well worthy to be hung up in history,—this cordial and enduring alliance of the calm, dignified, sedate Washington, mature in years and wisdom, and the young, buoyant, enthusiastic Lafayette.

The several divisions of the army had been summoned to the immediate neighborhood of Philadelphia, and the militia of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the northern parts of Virginia were called out. Many of the militia, with Colonel Proctor's corps of artillery, had been ordered to rendezvous at Chester on the Delaware, about twelve miles below Philadelphia; and, by Washington's orders, General Wayne left his brigade under the next in command, and repaired to Chester, to arrange the troops assembling there.

As there had been much disaffection to the cause evinced in Philadelphia, Washington, in order to encourage its friends and dishearten its enemies, marched with the whole army through the city, down Front and up Chestnut Street. Great pains were taken to make the display as imposing as possible.

* Washington to Benjamin Harrison. Sparks, v. 35.

All were charged to keep to their ranks, carry their arms well, and step in time to the music of the drums and fifes, collected in the centre of each brigade. "Though indifferently dressed," says a spectator, "they held well-burnished arms, and carried them like soldiers, and looked, in short, as if they might have faced an equal number with a reasonable prospect of success." To give them something of the uniform appearance, they had sprigs of green in their hats.

Washington rode at the head of the troops attended by his numerous staff, with the Marquis Lafayette by his side. The long column of the army, broken into divisions and brigades, the pioneers with their axes, the squadrons of horse, the extended trains of artillery, the tramp of steed, the bray of trumpet, and the spirit-stirring sound of drum and fife, all had an imposing effect on a peaceful city unused to the sight of marshalled armies. The disaffected, who had been taught to believe the American forces much less than they were in reality, were astonished as they gazed on their lengthening procession of a host, which, to their unpracticed eyes, appeared innumerable; while the whigs, gaining fresh hope and animation from the sight, cheered the patriot squadrons as they passed.

Having marched through Philadelphia, the army continued on to Wilmington, at the confluence of Christiana Creek and the Brandywine, where Washington set up his head-quarters, his troops being encamped on the neighboring heights.

We will now revert to the other object of Washington's care and solicitude, the invading army of Burgoyne in the north; and will see how far his precautionary measures were effective.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BURGOYNE AT SKENESBOROUGH.—PREPARES TO MOVE TOWARDS THE HUDSON.—MAJOR SKENE THE ROYALIST.—SLOW MARCH TO FORT ANNE.—SCHUYLER AT FORT MILLER.—PAINTED WARRIORS.—LANGLADE.—ST. LUC.—HONOR OF THE TOMAHAWK.—TRAGICAL HISTORY OF MISS M'CREA.—ITS RESULTS.—BURGOYNE ADVANCES TO FORT EDWARD.—SCHUYLER AT STILLWATER.—JOINED BY LINCOLN.—BURGOYNE DESERTED BY HIS INDIAN ALLIES.

In a preceding chapter we left Burgoyne, early in July, at Skenesborough, of which he had just gained possession. He remained there nearly three weeks, awaiting the arrival of the

residue of his troops, with tents, baggage and provisions, and preparing for his grand move toward the Hudson River. Many royalists flocked to his standard. One of the most important was Major Skene, from whom the place was named, being its founder, and the owner of much land in its neighborhood. He had served in the French War, but retired on half pay; bought "soldiers' grants" of land lying within this township, at a trifling price, had their titles secured by royal patent, and thus made a fortune. Burgoyne considered him a valuable adjunct and counselor, and frequently took advice from him in his campaign through this part of the country.

The progress of the army towards the Hudson was slow and difficult, in consequence of the impediments which Schuyler had multiplied in his way during his long halt at Skenesborough. Bridges broken down had to be rebuilt; great trees to be removed which had been felled across the roads and into Wood Creek, which stream was completely choked. It was not until the latter part of July that Burgoyne reached Fort Anne. At his approach, General Schuyler retired from Fort Edward and took post at Fort Miller, a few miles lower down the Hudson.

The Indian allies who had hitherto accompanied the British army had been more troublesome than useful. Neither Burgoyne nor his officers understood their language, but were obliged to communicate with them through Canadian interpreters; too often designing knaves, who played false to both parties. The Indians, too, were of the tribes of Lower Canada, corrupted and debased by intercourse with white men. It had been found difficult to draw them from the plunder of Ticonderoga, or to restrain their murderous propensities.

A party had recently arrived of a different stamp. Braves of the Ottawa and other tribes from the upper country; painted and decorated with savage magnificence, and bearing trophies of former triumphs. They were, in fact, according to Burgoyne, the very Indians who had aided the French in the defeat of Braddock, and were under the conduct of two French leaders; one, named Langlade, had command of them on that very occasion; the other, named St. Luc, is described by Burgoyne as a Canadian gentleman of honor and abilities, and one of the best partisans of the French in the war of 1756.

Burgoyne trusted to his newly arrived Indians to give a check to the operations of Schuyler, knowing the terror they inspired throughout the country. He thought also to employ them in a wild foray to the Connecticut River, to force a supply of provisions, intercept reinforcements to the American

army, and confirm the jealousy which he had, in many ways, endeavored to excite in the New England provinces. He was naturally a humane man, and disliked Indian allies, but these had hitherto served in company with civilized troops, and he trusted to the influence possessed over them by St. Luc and Langlade, to keep them within the usages of war. A circumstance occurred, however, which showed how little the "wild honor" of these warriors of the tomahawk was to be depended upon.

In General Fraser's division was a young officer, Lieutenant David Jones, an American loyalist. His family had their home in the vicinity of Fort Edward before the Revolution. A mutual attachment had taken place between the youth and a beautiful girl, Jane McCrea. She was the daughter of a Scotch Presbyterian clergyman of the Jerseys, some time deceased, and resided with her brother on the banks of the Hudson, a few miles below Fort Edward. The lovers were engaged to be married, when the breaking out of the war severed families and disturbed all the relations of life. The Joneses were royalists; the brother of Miss McCrea was a staunch whig. The former removed to Canada, where David Jones was among the most respectable of those who joined the royal standard, and received a lieutenant's commission.

The attachment between the lovers continued, and it is probable that a correspondence was kept up between them. Lieutenant Jones was now in Fraser's camp; in his old neighborhood. Miss McCrea was on a visit to a widow lady, Mrs. O'Niel, residing at Fort Edward. The approach of Burgoyne's army had spread an alarm through the country; the inhabitants were flying from their homes. The brother of Miss McCrea determined to remove to Albany, and sent for his sister to return home and make ready to accompany him. She hesitated to obey. He sent a more urgent message, representing the danger of lingering near the fort, which must inevitably fall into the hands of the enemy. Still she lingered. The lady with whom she was a guest was a royalist, a friend of General Fraser; her roof would be respected. Even should Fort Edward be captured, what had Jane to fear? Her lover was in the British camp; the capture of the fort would reunite them.

Her brother's messages now became peremptory. She prepared, reluctantly, to obey, and was to embark in a large bateau which was to convey several families down the river. The very morning when the embarkation was to take place, the neighborhood was a scene of terror. A marauding party of Indians, sent out by Burgoyne to annoy General Schuyler,

were harassing the country. Several of them burst into the house of Mrs. O'Niel, sacked and plundered it, and carried off her and Miss McCrea prisoners. In her fright the latter promised the savages a large reward, if they would spare her life and take her in safety to the British camp. It was a fatal promise. Halting at a spring, a quarrel arose among the savages, inflamed most probably with drink, as to whose prize she was, and who was entitled to the reward. The dispute became furious, and one, in a paroxysm of rage, killed her on the spot. He completed the savage act by bearing off her scalp as a trophy.

General Burgoyne was struck with horror when he heard of this bloody deed. What at first heightened the atrocity was a report that the Indians had been sent by Lieutenant Jones to bring Miss McCrea to the camp. This he positively denied, and his denial was believed. Burgoyne summoned a council of the Indian chiefs, in which he insisted that the murderer of Miss McCrea should be given up to receive the reward of his crime. The demand produced a violent agitation. The culprit was a great warrior, a chief, and the "wild honor" of his brother sachems was roused in his behalf. St. Luc took Burgoyne aside, and entreated him not to push the matter to extremities; assuring him that, from what was passing among the chiefs, he was sure they and their warriors would all abandon the army, should the delinquent be executed. The British officers also interfered, representing the danger that might accrue should the Indians return through Canada, with their savage resentments awakened, or, what was worse, should they go over to the Americans.

Burgoyne was thus reluctantly brought to spare the offender, but thenceforth made it a rule that no party of Indians should be permitted to go forth on a foray unless under the conduct of a British officer, or some other competent person, who should be responsible for their behavior.

The mischief to the British cause, however, had been effected. The murder of Miss McCrea resounded throughout the land, counteracting all the benefit anticipated from the terror of Indian hostilities. Those people of the frontiers, who had hitherto remained quiet, now flew to arms to defend their families and firesides. In their exasperation they looked beyond the savages to their employers. They abhorred an army, which, professing to be civilized, could league itself with such barbarians; and they execrated a government which, pretending to reclaim them as subjects, could let loose such fiends to desolate their homes.

The blood of this unfortunate girl, therefore, was not shed in vain. Armies sprang up from it. Her name passed as a note of alarm, along the banks of the Hudson; it was a rallying word among the Green Mountains of Vermont, and brought down all their hardy yeomanry.*

As Burgoyne advanced to Fort Edward, Schuyler fell still further back, and took post at Saratoga, or rather Stillwater, about thirty miles from Albany. He had been joined by Major-general Lincoln, who, according to Washington's directions, had hastened to his assistance. In pursuance of Washington's plans, Lincoln proceeded to Manchester in Vermont, to take command of the militia forces collecting at that point. His presence inspired new confidence in the country people, who were abandoning their homes, leaving their crops ungathered, and taking refuge with their families in the lower towns. He found about five hundred militia assembled at Manchester, under Colonel Seth Warner; others were coming on from New Hampshire and Massachusetts, to protect their uncovered frontier. His letters, dated the 4th of August, expressed the expectation of being, in a few days, at the head of at least two thousand men. With these, according to Washington's plan, he was to hang on the flank and rear of Burgoyne's army, cramp its movements, and watch for an opportunity to strike a blow.

Burgoyne was now at Fort Edward. "The enthusiasm of the army, as well as of the general, upon their arrival on the Hudson River, which had been so long the object of their hopes and wishes, may be better conceived than described," says a British writer of the day. The enthusiasm of the general was soon checked, however, by symptoms of ill-humor among his Indians allies. They resented his conduct in regard to the affair of Miss McCrea, and were impatient under the restraint to which they were subjected. He suspected the Canadian interpreters of fomenting this discontent, they being accustomed to profit by the rapine of the Indians. At the earnest request

* The sad story of Miss McCrea, like many other incidents of the Revolution, has been related in such a variety of ways, and so wrought up by tradition, that it is difficult now to get at the simple truth. Some of the above circumstances were derived from a niece of Miss McCrea, whom the author met upwards of fifty years since, at her residence on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A stone, with her name cut on it, still marks the grave of Miss McCrea near the ruins of Fort Edward; and a tree is pointed out near which she was murdered. Lieutenant Jones is said to have been completely broken in spirit by the shock of her death. Procuring her scalp, with its long silken tresses, he brooded over it in anguish, and preserved it as a sad, but precious relic. Disgusted with the service, he threw up his commission, and retired to Canada; never marrying, but living to be an old man; taciturn and melancholy, and haunted by painful recollections.

of St. Luc, in whom he still had confidence, he called a council of the chiefs; when, to his astonishment, the tribe for whom that gentleman acted as interpreter, declared their intention of returning home, and demanded his concurrence and assistance.

Burgoyne was greatly embarrassed. Should he acquiesce, it would be to relinquish the aid of a force obtained at an immense expense, esteemed in England of great importance, and which really was serviceable in furnishing scouts and outposts; yet he saw that a cordial reconciliation with them could only be effected by revoking his prohibitions, and indulging their propensities to blood and rapine.

To his credit be it recorded, he adhered to what was right, and rejected what might be deemed expedient. He refused their proposition, and persisted in the restraints he had imposed upon them, but appealed to the wild honor, of which he yet considered them capable, by urging the ties of faith, of generosity, of everything that has an influence with civilized man. His speech appeared to have a good effect. Some of the remote tribes made zealous professions of loyalty and adhesion. Others, of Lower Canada, only asked furloughs for parties to return home and gather in their harvests. These were readily granted, and perfect harmony seemed restored. The next day, however, the chivalry of the wilderness deserted by scores, laden with such spoil as they had collected in their maraudings. These desertions continued from day to day, until there remained in the camp scarce a vestige of the savage warriors that had joined the army at Skenesborough.

CHAPTER XXX.

DIFFICULTIES OF BURGOYNE.—PLANS AN EXPEDITION TO BENNINGTON.—ST. LEGER BEFORE FORT STANWIX.—GENERAL HERKIMER AT ORISKANY.—HIGH WORDS WITH HIS OFFICERS.—A DOGGED MARCH.—AN AMBUSCADE.—BATTLE OF ORISKANY.—JOHNSON'S GREENS.—DEATH OF HERKIMER.—SPIRITED SORTIE OF COLONEL WILLETT.—SIR JOHN JOHNSON DRIVEN TO THE RIVER.—FLIGHT OF THE INDIANS.—SACKING OF SIR JOHN'S CAMP.—COLONEL GANSEVOORT MAINTAINS HIS POST.—COLONEL WILLETT SENT IN QUEST OF AID.—ARRIVES AT SCHUYLER'S CAMP.

New difficulties beset Burgoyne at Fort Edward. The horses which had been contracted for in Canada, for draft, burden, and

saddle, arrived slowly and scantily ; having to come a long distance through the wilderness. Artillery and munitions, too, of all kinds, had to be brought from Ticonderoga by the way of Lake George. These, with a vast number of boats for freight, or to form bridges, it was necessary to transport over the carrying-places between the lakes ; and by land from Fort George to Fort Edward. Unfortunately, the army had not the requisite supply of horses and oxen. So far from being able to bring forward provisions for a march, it was with difficulty enough could be furnished to feed the army from day to day.

While thus situated, Burgoyne received intelligence that the part of his army which he had detached from Canada under Colonel St. Leger, to proceed by lake Ontario and Oswego and make a diversion on the Mokawk, had penetrated to that river, and were actually investing Fort Stanwix, the stronghold of that part of the country.

To carry out the original plan of his campaign, it now behooved him to make a rapid move down the Hudson, so as to be at hand to cooperate with St. Leger on his approach to Albany. But how was he to do this, deficient as he was in horses and vehicles for transportation ? In this dilemma Colonel (late major) Skene, the royalist of Skenesborough, to whom, from his knowledge of all this region, he had of late resorted for counsel, informed him that at Bennington, about twenty-four miles east of the Hudson, the Americans had a great depot of horses, carriages, and supplies of all kinds, intended for their Northern army. This place, he added, might easily be surprised, being guarded by only a small militia force.

An expedition was immediately set on foot, not only to surprise this place, but to scour the country from Rockingham to Otter Creek ; go down the Connecticut as far as Brattleborough, and return by the great road to Albany, there to meet Burgoyne. They were to make prisoners of all officers, civil and military, whom they might meet, acting under Congress ; to tax the towns where they halted with everything they stood in need of, and bring off all horses fit for the dragoons, or for battalion service, with as many saddles and bridles as could be found.

They were everywhere to give out that this was the vanguard of the British army, which would soon follow on its way to Boston, and would soon be joined by the army from Rhode Island. Before relating the events of this expedition, we will turn to notice those of the detachment under St. Leger, with which it was intended to coöperate, and which was investing Fort Schuyler.

This fort, built in 1756, on the site of an old French fortifica-

tion, and formerly called Fort Stanwix, from a British general of that name, was situated on the right bank of the Mohawk River, at the head of its navigation, and commanding the carrying-place between it and Wood Creek, whence the boats passed to the Oneida Lake, the Oswego River, and Lake Ontario. It was thus a key to the intercourse between Upper Canada and the valley of the Mohawk. The fort was square, with four bastions, and was originally a place of strength; having bombproof magazines, a deep moat and draw-bridge, a sallyport, and covered way. In the long interval of peace subsequent to the French war, it had fallen to decay. Recently it had been repaired by order of General Schuyler, and had received his name. It was garrisoned by seven hundred and fifty continental troops from New York and Massachusetts, and was under the command of Colonel Gansevoort of the New York line, a stout-hearted officer of Dutch descent, who had served under General Montgomery in Canada.

It was a motley force which appeared before it; British, Hessian, Royalist, Canadian, and Indians, about seventeen hundred in all. Among them were St. Leger's rangers and Sir John Johnson's royalist corps, called his greens. Many of the latter had followed Sir John into Canada from the valley of the Mohawk, and were now returned to bring the horrors of war among their former neighbors. The Indians, their worthy allies, were led by the famous Brant.

On the 3d of August, St. Leger sent in a flag with a summons to surrender; accompanied by a proclamation in style and spirit similar to that recently issued by Burgoyne, and intended to operate on the garrison. Both his summons and his proclamation were disregarded. He now set his troops to work to fortify his camp and clear obstructions from Wood Creek and the roads, for the transportation of artillery and provisions, and sent out scouting parties of Indians in all directions, to cut off all communication of the garrison with the surrounding country. A few shells were thrown into the fort. The chief annoyance of the garrison was from the Indians firing with their rifles from behind trees on those busied in repairing the parapets. At night they seemed completely to surround the fort, filling the woods with their yells and howlings.

On the 6th of August, three men made their way into the fort through a swamp, which the enemy had deemed impassable. They brought the cheering intelligence that General Herkimer, the veteran commander of the militia of Tryon County, was at Oriskany, about eight miles distant, with upwards of eight hundred men. The people of that county were many of them

of German origin; some of them Germans by birth. Herkimer was among the former; a large and powerful man, about sixty-five years of age. He requested Colonel Gansevoort, through his three messengers, to fire three signal-guns on receiving word of his vicinage; upon hearing which, he would endeavor to force his way to the fort, depending upon the co-operation of the garrison.

The messengers had been despatched by Herkimer on the evening of the 5th, and he had calculated that they would reach the fort at a very early hour in the morning. Through some delay, they did not reach it until between ten and eleven o'clock. Gansevoort instantly complied with the message. Three signal-guns were fired, and Colonel Willett, of the New York Continentals, with two hundred and fifty men and an iron three-pounder, was detached to make a diversion, by attacking that part of the enemy's camp occupied by Johnson and his royalists.

The delay of the messengers in the night, however, disconcerted the plan of Herkimer. He marshaled his troops by daybreak and waited for the signal-guns. Hour after hour elapsed, but no gun was heard. His officers became impatient of delay, and urged an immediate march. Herkimer represented that they were too weak to force their way to the fort without reinforcements, or without being sure of coöperation from the garrison, and was still for awaiting the preconcerted signals. High words ensued between him and two of his officers. He had a brother and other relatives among the enemy, and hence there were some doubts of his fidelity, though they subsequently proved to be unmerited. Colonels Cox and Paris were particularly urgent for an advance, and suspicious of the motives for holding back. Paris was a prominent man in Tryon County, and member of the Committee of Safety, and in compliance with the wishes of that committee, accompanied Herkimer as his volunteer aide. Losing his temper in the dispute, he accused the latter of being either a tory or a coward. "No," replied the brave old man, "I feel toward you all as a father, and will not lead you into a scrape from which I cannot extricate you." His discretion, however, was overpowered by repeated taunts, and he at length, about nine o'clock, gave the word to march; intimating, however, that those who were the most eager to advance, would be the first to run away.

The march was rather dogged and irregular. There was ill-humor between the general and his officers. Colonels Paris and Cox advised him to throw out a reconnoitering party in the advance, but he disregarded their advice, and perhaps in very

opposition to it, neglected so necessary a precaution. About ten o'clock they came to a place where the road was carried on a causeway of logs across a deep marshy ravine, between high level banks. The main division descended into the ravine, followed by the baggage-wagons. They had scarcely crossed it, when enemies suddenly sprang up in front and on either side, with deadly volleys of musketry, and deafening yells and war-whoops. In fact, St. Leger, apprised by his scouts of their intended approach, had sent a force to waylay them. This was composed of a division of Johnson's greens, led by his brother-in-law, Major Watts; a company of rangers under Colonel Butler, a refugee from this neighborhood, and a strong body of Indians under Brant. The troops were stationed in front just beyond the ravine, the Indians along each side of the road. The plan of the ambuscade was to let the van of the Americans pass the ravine and advance between the concealed parties, when the attack was to be commenced by the troops in front, after which, the Indians were to fall on the Americans in rear and cut off all retreat.

The savages, however, could not restrain their natural ferocity and hold back as ordered, but discharge their rifles simultaneously with the troops, and instantly rushed forward with spears and tomahawks, yelling like demons, and commencing a dreadful butchery. The rear-guard, which had not entered the ravine, retreated. The main body, though thrown into confusion, defended themselves bravely. One of those severe conflicts ensued, common in Indian warfare, where the combatants take post with their rifles, behind rock and tree, or come to deadly struggle with knife and tomahawk.

The veteran Herkimer was wounded early in the action. A musket ball shattered his leg just below the knee, killing his horse at the same time. He made his men place him on his saddle at the foot of a large beech tree, against the trunk of which he leaned, continuing to give his orders.

The regulars attempted to charge with the bayonet; but the Americans formed themselves in circles back to back, and repelled them. A heavy storm of thunder and rain caused a temporary lull to the fight, during which the patriots changed their ground. Some of them stationed themselves in pairs behind trees; so that when one had fired the other could cover him until he had reloaded; for the savages were apt to rush up with knife and tomahawk the moment a man had discharged his piece. Johnson's greens came up to sustain the Indians, who were giving way, and now was the fiercest part of the fight. Old neighbors met in deadly feud; former intimacy

gave bitterness to present hate, and war was literally carried to the knife ; for the bodies of combatants were afterwards found on the field of battle, grappled in death, with the hand still grasping the knife plunged in a neighbor's heart. The very savages seemed inspired with unusual ferocity by the confusion and death struggle around them, and the sight of their prime warriors and favorite chiefs shot down. In their blind fury they attacked the white men indiscriminately, friend or foe, so that in this chance-medley fight many of Sir John's greens were slain by his own Indian allies.

A confusion reigns over the accounts of this fight, in which every one saw little but what occurred in his immediate vicinity. The Indians, at length, having lost many of their bravest warriors, gave the retreating cry, "Oonah ! Oonah !" and fled to the woods. The greens and rangers, hearing a firing in the direction of the fort, feared an attack upon their camp, and hastened to its defense, carrying off with them many prisoners. The Americans did not pursue them, but placing their wounded on litters made of branches of trees, returned to Oriskany. Both parties have claimed the victory ; but it does not appear that either was entitled to it. The dead of both parties lay for days unburied on the field of action, and a wounded officer of the enemy (Major Watts) lay there two days unrelieved, until found by an Indian scout. It would seem as if each party gladly abandoned this scene of one of the most savage conflicts of the Revolution. The Americans had two hundred killed, and a number wounded. Several of these were officers. The loss of the enemy is thought to have been equally great as to numbers ; but then the difference in value between regulars and militia ! the former often the refuse of mankind, mere hirelings, whereas among the privates of the militia, called out from their homes to defend their neighborhood, were many of the worthiest and most valuable of the yeomanry. The premature haste of the Indians in attacking, had saved the Americans from being completely surrounded. The rear-guard, not having entered the defile, turned and made a rapid retreat, but were pursued by the Indians, and suffered greatly in a running fight. We may add that those who had been most urgent with General Herkimer for this movement, were among the first to suffer from it. Colonel Cox was shot down at the first fire, so was a son of Colonel Paris ; the colonel himself was taken prisoner, and fell beneath the tomahawk of the famous Red Jacket.

As to General Herkimer, he was conveyed to his residence on the Mohawk River, and died nine days after the battle, not so much from his wound as from bad surgery ; sinking gradu-

ally through loss of blood from an unskillful amputation. He died like a philosopher and a Christian, smoking his pipe and reading his Bible to the last. His name has been given to a county in that part of the State.*

The sortie of Colonel Willett had been spirited and successful. He attacked the encampments of Sir John Johnson and the Indians, which were contiguous, and strong detachments of which were absent on the ambuscade. Sir John and his men were driven to the river, and the Indians fled to the woods. Willett sacked their camps; loaded wagons with camp equipment, clothing, blankets, and stores of all kinds, seized the baggage and papers of Sir John and of several of his officers, and retreated safely to the fort, just as St. Leger was coming up with a powerful reinforcement. Five colors, which he had brought away with him as trophies, were displayed under the flag of the fort, while his men gave three cheers from the ramparts.

St. Leger now endeavored to operate on the fears of the garrison. His prisoners, it is said, were compelled to write a letter, giving dismal accounts of the affair of Oriskany, and of the impossibility of getting any succor to the garrison; of the probability that Burgoyne and his army were before Albany, and advising surrender to prevent inevitable destruction. It is probable that they were persuaded, rather than compelled, to write the letter, which took its tone from their own depressed feelings and the misrepresentations of those around them. St. Leger accompanied the letter with warnings that, should the garrison persist in resistance, he would not be able to restrain the fury of the savages; who, though held in check for the present, threatened, if further provoked, to revenge the deaths of their warriors and chiefs by slaughtering the garrison, and laying waste the whole valley of the Mohawk.

All this failing to shake the resolution of Gansevoort, St. Leger next issued an appeal to the inhabitants of Tryon County, signed by their old neighbors, Sir John Johnson, Colonel Claus, and Colonel Butler, promising pardon and protection to all who should submit to royal authority, and urging them to send a deputation of their principal men to overcome the mulish obstinacy of the garrison, and save the whole surrounding country from Indian ravage and massacre. The people of the county, however, were as little to be moved as the garrison.

St. Leger now began to lose heart. The fort proved more capable of defense than he had anticipated. His artillery

* Some of the particulars of this action were given to the author by a son of Colonel Paris.

was too light, and the ramparts, being of sod, were not easily battered. He was obliged reluctantly to resort to the process of sapping and mining, and began to make regular approaches.

Gansevoort, seeing the siege was likely to be protracted, resolved to send to General Schuyler for succor. Colonel Willett volunteered to undertake the perilous errand. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Stockwell, an excellent woodsman, who served as a guide. They left the fort on the 10th, after dark, by a sally-port, passed by the British sentinels and close by the Indian camp, without being discovered, and made their way through bog and morass and pathless forests, and all kinds of risks and hardships, until they reached the German Flats on the Mohawk. Here Willett procured a couple of horses, and by dint of hoof arrived at the camp of General Schuyler at Stillwater. A change had come over the position of that commander four days previous to the arrival of Colonel Willett, as we shall relate in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SCHUYLER HEARS OF THE AFFAIR OF ORISKANY.—APPLIES FOR REINFORCEMENTS.—HIS APPEAL TO THE PATRIOTISM OF STARK.—SCHUYLER SUPERSEDED.—HIS CONDUCT THEREUPON.—RELIEF SENT TO FORT STANWIX.—ARNOLD VOLUNTEERS TO CONDUCT IT.—CHANGE OF ENCAMPMENT.—PATRIOTIC DETERMINATION OF SCHUYLER.—DETACHMENT OF THE ENEMY AGAINST BENNINGTON.—GERMANS AND THEIR INDIAN ALLIES.—BAUM, THE HESSIAN LEADER.—STARK IN THE FIELD.—MUSTERING OF THE MILITIA.—A BELLIGERENT PARSON.—BATTLE OF BENNINGTON.—BREYMAN TO THE RESCUE.—ROUTED.—RECEPTION OF THE NEWS IN THE RIVAL CAMPS. WASHINGTON URGES NEW ENGLAND TO FOLLOW UP THE BLOW.

SCHUYLER was in Albany in the early part of August, making stirring appeals in every direction for reinforcements. Burgoyne was advancing upon him; he had received news of the disastrous affair at Oriskany, and the death of General Herkimer, and Tryon County was crying to him for assistance. One of his appeals was to the veteran John Stark, the comrade of Putman in the French war and the battle of Bunker's Hill. He had his farm in the Hampshire Grants, and his name was a tower of strength among the Green Mountain Boys. But Stark was soured with government, and had retired from service, his name having been omitted in the list of promotions. Hearing that he was on a visit to Lincoln's camp at Manchester, Schuyler wrote to that General, "Assure General Stark that I have acquainted Congress of his situation, and that I trust and entreat he will, in the present alarming crisis, waive his right; the greater the sacrifice he makes to his feelings, the greater will be the honor due to him for not having suffered any con-

sideration whatever to come in competition with the weal of his country : entreat him to march immediately to our army."

Schuyler had instant call to practice the very virtue he was inculcating. He was about to mount his horse on the 10th, to return to the camp at Stillwater, when a despatch from Congress was put into his hand containing the resolves which recalled him to attend a court of inquiry about the affair of Ticonderoga, and requested Washington to appoint an officer to succeed him.

Schuyler felt deeply the indignity of being thus recalled at a time when an engagement was apparently at hand, but endeavored to console himself with the certainty that a thorough investigation of his conduct would prove how much he was entitled to the thanks of his country. He intimated the same in his reply to Congress; in the meantime, he considered it his duty to remain at his post until his successor should arrive, or some officer in the department be nominated to the command. Returning, therefore, to the camp at Stillwater, he continued to conduct the affairs of the army with unremitting zeal. "Until the country is in safety," said he, "I will stifle my resentment."

His first care was to send relief to Gansevoort and his beleaguered garrison. Eight hundred men were all that he could spare from his army in its present threatened state. A spirited and effective officer was wanted to lead them. Arnold was in camp; recently sent on as an efficient coadjutor, by Washington; he was in a state of exasperation against the government, having just learnt that the question of rank had been decided against him in Congress. Indeed, he would have retired instantly from the service, had not Schuyler prevailed on him to remain until the impending danger was over. It was hardly to be expected, that in his irritated mood he would accept the command of the detachment, if offered to him. Arnold, however, was a combustible character. The opportunity of an exploit flashed on his adventurous spirit. He stepped promptly forward and volunteered to lead the enterprise. "No public nor private injury or insult," said he, "shall prevail on me to forsake the cause of my injured and oppressed country, until I see peace and liberty restored to her, or nobly die in the attempt."*

After the departure of this detachment, it was unanimously determined in a council of war of Schuyler and his general officers, that the post at Stillwater was altogether untenable

* Letter to Gates. *Gates's Papers*.

with their actual force ; part of the army, therefore, retired to the islands at the fords on the mouth of the Mohawk River, where it empties into the Hudson, and a brigade was posted above the Falls of the Mohawk, called the Cohoes, to prevent the enemy from crossing there. It was considered a strong position, where they could not be attacked without great disadvantage to the assailant.

The feelings of Schuyler were more and more excited as the game of war appeared drawing to a crisis. "I am resolved," writes he to his friend Duane, "to make another sacrifice to my country, and risk the censure of Congress by remaining in this quarter *after* I am relieved, and bringing up the militia to the support of this weak army."

As yet he did not know who was to be his successor in the command. A letter from Duane informed him that General Gates was the man.

Still the noble part of Schuyler's nature was in the ascendant. "Your fears may be up," writes he in reply, "lest the ill-treatment I have experienced at his hands, should so far get the better of my judgment as to embarrass him. Do not, my dear friend, be uneasy on that account. I am incapable of sacrificing my country to a resentment, however just ; and I trust I shall give an example of what a good citizen ought to do when he is in my situation."

We will now take a view of occurrences on the right and left of Burgoyne, and show the effect of Schuyler's measures, poorly seconded as they were, in crippling and straitening the invading army. And first, we will treat of the expedition against Bennington. This was a central place, whither the live stock was driven from various parts of the Hampshire Grants, and whence the American army derived its supplies. It was a great deposit, also, of grain of various kinds, and of wheel carriages ; the usual guard was militia, varying from day to day. Bennington was to be surprised. The country was to be scoured from Rockingham to Otter Creek, in quest of provisions for the army, horses and oxen for draft, and horses for the cavalry. All public magazines were to be sacked. All cattle belonging to royalists, and which could be spared by their owners, were to be paid for. All rebel flocks and herds were to be driven away.

Generals Phillips and Riedesel demurred strongly to the expedition, but their counsels were outweighed by those of Colonel Skene, the royalist. He knew, he said, all the country thereabout. The inhabitants were as five to one in favor of the

royal cause, and would be prompt to turn out on the first appearance of a protecting army. He was to accompany the expedition, and much was expected from his personal influence and authority.

Lieutenant-colonel Baum was to command the detachment. He had under him, according to Burgoyne, two hundred dismounted dragoons of the regiment of Riedesel, Captain Fraser's marksmen, which were the only British, all the Canadian volunteers, a party of the provincials who perfectly knew the country, one hundred Indians, and two light pieces of cannon. The whole detachment amounted to about five hundred men. The dragoons, it was expected, would supply themselves with horses in the course of the foray, and a skeleton corps of royalists would be filled up by recruits.

The Germans had no great liking for the Indians as fellow campaigners; especially those who had come from Upper Canada under St. Luc. "These savages are heathens, huge, warlike, and enterprising, but wicked as Satan," writes a Hessian officer. "Some say they are cannibals, but I do not believe it; though in their fury they will tear the flesh off their enemies with their teeth. They have a martial air, and their wild ornaments become them."* St. Luc, who commanded them, had been a terror to the English colonists in the French war, and it was intimated that he possessed great treasures of "old English scalps." He and his warriors, however, had disappeared from camp since the affair of Miss McCrea. The present were Indians from Lower Canada.

The choice of German troops for this foray, was much sneered at by the British officers. "A corps could not have been found in the whole army," said they, "so unfit for a service requiring rapidity of motion, as Riedesel's dragoons. The very hat and sword of one of them weighed nearly as much as the whole equipment of a British soldier. The worst British regiment in the service would march two miles to their one."

To be nearer at hand in case assistance should be required, Burgoyne encamped on the east side of the Hudson, nearly opposite Saratoga, throwing over a bridge of boats by which General Fraser, with the advanced guard, crossed to that place. Colonel Baum set out from camp at break of day, on the 13th of August. All that had been predicted of his movements was verified. The badness of the road, the excessive heat of the weather, and the want of carriages and horses were alleged in

* Schläzer's *Briefwechsel* Th. iii. Heft xvii.

excuse ; but slow and unapt men ever meet with impediments. Some cattle, carts, and wagons, were captured at Cambridge ; a few horses also were brought in ; but the Indians killed or drove off all that fell into their hands, unless they were paid in cash for their prizes. "The country people of these parts," writes the Hessian narrator, "came in crowds to Governor Skene, as he was called, and took the oath of allegiance ; but even these faithless people," adds he, "were subsequently our bitterest assailants."

Baum was too slow a man to take a place by surprise. The people of Bennington heard of his approach and were on the alert. The veteran Stark was there with eight or nine hundred troops. During the late alarms the militia of the State had been formed into two brigades, one to be commanded by General William Whipple ; Stark had with difficulty been prevailed upon to accept the command of the other, upon the express condition that he should not be obliged to join the main army, but should be left to his own discretion, to make war in his own partisan style, hovering about the enemy in their march through the country, and accountable to none but the authorities of New Hampshire.

General Lincoln had informed Stark of the order of General Schuyler, that all the militia should repair to Stillwater, but the veteran refused to comply. He had taken up arms, he said, in a moment of exigency, to defend the neighborhood, which would be exposed to the ravages of the enemy, should he leave it, and he held himself accountable solely to the authorities of New Hampshire. This act of insubordination might have involved the doughty but somewhat testy old general in subsequent difficulty, had not his sword carved out an ample excuse for him.

Having heard that Indians had appeared at Cambridge, twelve miles to the north of Bennington, on the 13th, he sent out two hundred men under Colonel Gregg in quest of them. In the course of the night he learnt that they were mere scouts in advance of a force marching upon Bennington. He immediately rallied his brigade, called out the militia of the neighborhood, and sent off for Colonel Seth Warner (the quondam associate of Ethan Allen) and his regiment of militia, who were with General Lincoln at Manchester.

Lincoln instantly detached them, and Warner and his men marched all night through drenching rain, arriving at Stark's camp in the morning, dripping wet.

Stark left them at Bennington to dry and rest themselves,

and then to follow on; in the meantime, he pushed forward with his men to support the party sent out the preceding day, under Gregg, in quest of the Indians. He met them about five miles off, in full retreat, Baum and his force a mile in their rear.

Stark halted and prepared for action. Baum also halted, posted himself on a high ground at a bend of the little river Walloomscoick, and began to intrench himself. Stark fell back a mile, to wait for reinforcements and draw down Baum from his strong position. A skirmish took place between the advance guards; thirty of Baum's men were killed, and two Indian chiefs.

An incessant rain on the 15th, prevented an attack on Baum's camp, but there was continual skirmishing. The colonel strengthened his intrenchments, and finding he had a larger force to contend with than he had anticipated, sent off in all haste to Burgoyne for reinforcements. Colonel Breyman marched off immediately, with five hundred Hessian grenadiers and infantry and two six-pounders, leaving behind him his tents, baggage, and standards. He also found the roads so deep, and the horses so bad, that he was nearly two days getting four-and-twenty miles. The tactics of the Hessians were against them. "So foolishly attached were they to forms of discipline," writes a British historian, "that in marching through thickets they stopped ten times an hour to dress their ranks." It was here, in fact, that they most dreaded the American rifle. "In the open field," said they, "the rebels are not much; but they are redoubtable in the woods." *

In the meantime the more alert and active Americans had been mustering from all quarters to Stark's assistance, with such weapons as they had at hand. During the night of the 15th, Colonel Symonds arrived with a body of Berkshire militia. Among them was a belligerent parson, full of fight, Allen by name, possibly of the bellicose family of the hero of Ticonderoga. "General," cried he, "the people of Berkshire have been often called out to no purpose; if you don't give them a chance to fight now they will never turn out again." "You would not turn out now, while it is dark and raining, would you?" demanded Stark. "Not just now," was the reply. "Well, if the Lord should once more give us sunshine, and I don't give you fighting enough," rejoined the veteran, "I'll never ask you to turn out again."

On the following morning the sun shone bright, and Stark

* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*.

prepared to attack Baum in his intrenchments ; though he had no artillery, and his men, for the most part, had only their ordinary brown firelocks without bayonets. Two hundred of his men, under Colonel Nichols, were detached to the rear of the enemy's left ; three hundred under Colonel Herrick, to the rear of his right ; they were to join their forces and attack him in the rear, while colonels Hubbard and Stickney, with two hundred men, diverted his attention in front.

Colonel Skene and the royalists, when they saw the Americans issuing out of the woods on different sides, persuaded themselves, and endeavored to persuade Baum, that these were the loyal people of the country flocking to his standard. The Indians were the first to discover the truth. "The woods are full of Yankees," cried they, and retreated in single file between the troops of Nichols and Herrick, yelling like demons and jingling cow bells. Several of them, however, were killed or wounded as they thus ran the gauntlet.

At the first sound of fire-arms Stark, who had remained with the main body in camp, mounted his horse and gave the word, *forward!* He had promised his men the plunder of the British camp. The homely speech made by him when in sight of the enemy, has often been cited. "Now, my men ! There are the red-coats ! Before night they must be ours, or Molly Stark will be a widow !"

Baum soon found himself assailed on every side, but he defended his works bravely. His two pieces of artillery, advantageously planted, were very effective, and his troops, if slow in march, were steady in action. For two hours the discharge of fire-arms was said to have been like the constant rattling of the drum. Stark in his despatches compared it to a "continued clap of thunder." It was the hottest fight he had ever seen. He inspired his men with his own impetuosity. They drove the royalist troops upon the Hessians, and pressing after them stormed the works with irresistible fury. A Hessian eye-witness declares that this time the rebels fought with desperation, pressing within eight paces of the loaded cannon to take surer aim at the artillerists. The latter were slain ; the cannon captured. The royalists and Canadians took flight, and escaped to the woods. The Germans still kept their ground, and fought bravely, until there was not a cartridge left. Baum and his dragoons then took to their broadswords and the infantry to their bayonets, and endeavored to cut their way to a road in the woods, but in vain ; many were killed, more wounded, Baum among the number, and all who survived were taken prisoners.*

* *Briefe aus Amerika.* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, Th. iii. Heft. xiii.

The victors now dispersed, some to collect booty, some to attend to the wounded, some to guard the prisoners, and some to seek refreshments, being exhausted by hunger and fatigue. At this critical juncture, Breyman's tardy reinforcement came, making its way heavily and slowly to the scene of action, joined by many of the enemy who had fled. Attempts were made to rally the militia; but they were in complete confusion. Nothing would have saved them from defeat, had not Colonel Seth Warner's corps fortunately arrived from Bennington, fresh from repose, and advanced to meet the enemy, while the others regained their ranks. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when this second action commenced. It was fought from wood to wood, and hill to hill, for several miles, until sunset. The last stand of the enemy was at Van Schaick's mill, where, having expended all their ammunition, of which each man had forty rounds, they gave way, and retreated, under favor of the night, leaving two field-pieces and all their baggage in the hands of the Americans. Stark ceased to pursue them, lest in the darkness his men should fire upon each other. "Another hour of daylight," said he in his report, "and I should have captured the whole body." The veteran had had a horse shot under him, but escaped without wound or bruise.

Four brass field-pieces, nine hundred dragoon swords, a thousand stand of arms, and four ammunition wagons were the spoils of this victory. Thirty-two officers, five hundred and sixty-four privates, including Canadians and loyalists were taken prisoners. The number of slain was very considerable, but could not be ascertained, many having fallen in the woods. The brave but unfortunate Baum did not long survive. The Americans had one hundred killed and wounded.

Burgoyne was awakened in his camp towards daylight of the 17th, by tidings that Colonel Baum had surrendered. Next came word that Colonel Breyman was engaged in severe and doubtful conflict. The whole army was roused, and were preparing to hasten to his assistance, when one report after another gave assurance that he was on his way back in safety. The main body, therefore, remained in camp at the Batten kiln; but Burgoyne forded that stream with the 47th regiment and pushed forward until four o'clock, when he met Breyman and his troops, weary and haggard with hard fighting and hard marching, in hot weather. In the evening all returned to their old encampments.*

General Schuyler was encamped on Van Schaick's Island at the mouth of the Mohawk River, when a letter from General

*Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, Th. iii. Heft. xiii.

Lincoln, dated Bennington, August 18th, informed him of "the capital blow given the enemy by General Stark." "I trust," replied he, August 19th, "that the severity with which they have been handled will retard General Burgoyne's progress. Part of his force was yesterday afternoon about three miles and a half above Stillwater. If the enemy have entirely left that part of the country you are in, I think it would be advisable for you to move towards Hudson River tending towards Stillwater."

"Governor Clinton," writes he to Stark on the same day, "is coming up with a body of militia, and I trust that after what the enemy have experienced from you, their progress will be retarded, and that we shall see them driven out of this part of the country."

He now hoped to hear that Arnold had raised the siege of Fort Stanwix. "If that take place," said he, "it will be possible to engage two or three hundred Indians to join this army, and Congress may rest assured that my best endeavors shall not be wanting to accomplish it."

Tidings of the affair of Bennington reached Washington, just before he moved his camp from the neighborhood of Philadelphia to Wilmington, and it relieved his mind from a world of anxious perplexity. In a letter to Putnam he writes, "As there is not now the least danger of General Howe's going to New England, I hope the whole force of that country will turn out, and, by following the great stroke struck by General Stark near Bennington, entirely crush General Burgoyne, who, by his letter to Colonel Baum, seems to be in want of almost everything."

We will now give the fate of Burgoyne's detachment, under St. Leger, sent to capture Fort Stanwix, and ravage the valley of the Mohawk.

CHAPTER XXXII.

STRATAGEM OF ARNOLD TO RELIEVE FORT STANWIX.—YAN YOST CUYLER.—THE SIEGE PRESSED.—INDIANS INTRACTABLE.—SUCCESS OF ARNOLD'S STRATAGEM.—HARASSED RETREAT OF ST. LEGER.—MORAL EFFECT OF THE TWO BLOWS GIVEN TO THE ENEMY.—BRIGHTENING PROSPECTS IN THE AMERICAN CAMP.—ARRIVAL OF GATES.—MAGNANIMOUS CONDUCT OF SCHUYLER.—POORLY REQUITED BY GATES.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GATES AND BURGOYNE CONCERNING THE MURDER OF MISS M'CREA.

ARNOLD's march to the relief of Fort Stanwix was slower than suited his ardent and impatient spirit. He was detained in the valley of the Mohawk by bad roads, by the necessity of waiting for baggage and ammunition wagons, and for militia recruits who turned out reluctantly. He sent missives to Colonel Gansevoort assuring him that he would relieve him in the course of a few days. "Be under no kind of apprehension," writes he. "I know the strength of the enemy, and *how to deal with them.*"

In fact, conscious of the smallness of his force, he had resorted to stratagem, sending emissaries ahead to spread exaggerated reports of the number of his troops, so as to work on the fears of the enemy's Indian allies and induce them to desert. The most important of these emissaries was one Yan Yost Cuyler, an eccentric half-witted fellow, known throughout the country as a rank tory. He had been convicted as a spy, and only spared from the halter on the condition that he would go into St. Leger's camp, and spread alarming reports among the Indians, by whom he was well known. To insure a faithful discharge of his mission, Arnold detained his brother as a hostage.

On his way up the Mohawk Valley, Arnold was joined by a New York regiment, under Colonel James Livingston, sent by Gates to reinforce him. On arriving at the German Flats he received an express from Colonel Gansevoort, informing him that he was still besieged, but in high spirits and under no apprehensions. In a letter to Gates, written from the German Flats (August 21st), Arnold says, "I leave this place this morning with twelve hundred continental troops and a handful

of militia for Fort Schuyler, still besieged by a number equal to ours. You will hear of my being victorious—or no more. As soon as the safety of this part of the country will permit, I will fly to your assistance.”*

All this while St. Leger was advancing his parallels and pressing the siege; while provisions and ammunition were rapidly decreasing within the fort. St. Leger’s Indian allies, however, were growing sullen and intractable. This slow kind of warfare, this war with the spade, they were unaccustomed to, and they by no means relished it. Beside, they had been led to expect easy times, little fighting, many scalps, and much plunder; whereas they had fought hard, lost many of their best chiefs, been checked in their cruelty, and gained no booty.

At this juncture, scouts brought word that a force one thousand strong was marching to the relief of the fort. Eager to put his savages in action, St. Leger in a council of war offered to their chiefs to place himself at their head, with three hundred of his best troops, and meet the enemy as they advanced. It was agreed, and they sallied forth together to choose a fighting ground. By this time rumors stole into the camp doubling the number of the approaching enemy. Burgoyne’s whole army were said to have been defeated. Lastly came Yan Yost Cuyler, with his coat bull of bullet holes, giving out that he had escaped from the hands of the Americans, and had been fired upon by them. His story was believed, for his wounded coat corroborated it, and he was known to be a royalist. Mingling among his old acquaintances, the Indians, he assured them that the Americans were close at hand and “numerous as the leaves on the trees.”

Arnold’s stratagem succeeded. The Indians, fickle as the winds, began to desert. Sir John Johnson and Colonels Claus and Butler endeavored in vain to reassure and retain them. In a little while two hundred had decamped, and the rest threatened to do so likewise, unless St. Leger retreated.

The unfortunate colonel found too late what little reliance was to be placed upon Indian allies. He determined, on the 22d, to send off his sick, his wounded, and his artillery by Wood Creek that very night, and to protect them by the line of march. The Indians, however, goaded on by Arnold’s emissaries, insisted on instant retreat. St. Leger still refused to depart before nightfall. The savages now became ungovernable. They seized upon liquor of the officers about to be embarked, and getting intoxicated, behaved like very fiends.

In a word, St. Leger was obliged to decamp about noon, in

* Gates’s *Papers*.

such hurry and confusion that he left his tents standing, and his artillery, with most of his baggage, ammunition, and stores, fell into the hands of the Americans.

A detachment from the garrison pursued and harassed him for a time; but his greatest annoyance was from his Indian allies, who plundered the boats which conveyed such baggage as had been brought off; murdered all stragglers who lagged in the rear, and amused themselves by giving false alarms to keep up the panic of the soldiery; who would throw away muskets, knapsacks, and everything that impeded their flight.

It was not until he reached Onondaga Falls, that St. Leger discovered by a letter from Burgoyne, and floating reports brought by the bearer, that he had been the dupe of a *ruse de guerre*, and that at the time the advancing foe were reported to be close upon his haunches, they were not within forty miles of him.

Such was the second blow to Burgoyne's invading army; but before the news of it reached that doomed commander, he had already been half paralyzed by the disaster at Bennington.

The moral effect of these two blows was such as Washington had predicted. Fortune, so long adverse, seemed at length to have taken a favorable turn. People were roused from their despondency. There was a sudden exultation throughout the country. The savages had disappeared in their native forests. The German veterans, so much vaunted and dreaded, had been vanquished by militia, and British artillery captured by men, some of whom had never seen a cannon.

Means were now augmenting in Schuyler's hands. Colonels Livingston and Pierre Van Courtlandt, forwarded by Putnam, were arrived. Governor Clinton was daily expected with New York militia from the Highlands. The arrival of Arnold was anticipated with troops and artillery, and Lincoln with the New England militia. At this propitious moment, when everything was ready for the sickle to be put into the harvest, General Gates arrived in the camp.

Schuyler received him with the noble courtesy to which he pledged himself. After acquainting him with all the affairs of the department, the measures he had taken and those he had projected, he informed him of his having signified to Congress his intention to remain in that quarter for the present, and render every service in his power; and he entreated Gates to call upon him for counsel and assistance whenever he thought proper.

Gates was in high spirits. His letters to Washington show

how completely he was aware that an easy path of victory had been opened for him. "Upon my leaving Philadelphia," writes he, "the prospect this way appeared most gloomy, but the severe checks the enemy have met with at Bennington and Tryon County, have given a more pleasing view of public affairs. Particular accounts of the signal victory gained by General Stark, and of the severe blow General Herkimer gave Sir John Johnson and the scalpers under his command, have been transmitted to your Excellency by General Schuyler. I anxiously expect the arrival of an express from General Arnold, with an account of the total defeat of the enemy in that quarter.

"I cannot sufficiently thank your Excellency for sending Colonel Morgan's corps to this army. They will be of the greatest service to it; for, until the late success this way, I am told the army were quite panic-struck by the Indians, and their tory and Canadian assassins in Indian dress.

Governor Clinton was immediately expected in camp, and he intended to consult with him and General Lincoln upon the best plan to distress, and, he hoped, finally to defeat the enemy. "We shall no doubt," writes he, "unanimously agree in sentiment with your Excellency, to keep generals Lincoln and Stark upon the flank and rear of the enemy, while the main body opposes them in front."

Not a word does he say of consulting Schuyler, who, more than any one else, was acquainted with the department and its concerns, who was in constant correspondence with Washington, and had coöperated with him in affecting the measures which had produced the present promising situation of affairs. So far was he from responding to Schuyler's magnanimity, and profiting by his nobly offered counsel and assistance, that he did not even ask him to be present at his first council of war, although he invited up General Ten Broeck of the militia from Albany to attend it.

His conduct in this respect provoked a caustic remark from the celebrated Gouverneur Morris. "The commander-in-chief of the Northern department," said he, "may, if he please, neglect to ask or disdain to receive advice, but those who know him, will, I am sure, be convinced that he wants it."

Gates opened hostilities against Burgoyne with the pen. He had received a letter from that commander, complaining of the harsh treatment experienced by the royalists captured at Bennington. "Duty and principle," writes Burgoyne, "made me a public enemy to the Americans who have taken up arms; but I seek to be a generous one; nor have I the shadow of

resentment against any individual who does not induce it by acts derogatory to those maxims upon which all men of honor think alike."

There was nothing in this that was not borne out by the conduct and character of Burgoyne; but Gates seized upon the occasion to assail that commander in no measured terms in regard to his Indian allies.

"That the savages," said he, "should in their warfare mangle the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands, is neither new nor extraordinary; but that the famous General Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall in every gazette confirm the horrid tale."

After this prelude, he went on to state the murder of Miss McCrea, alleging that her murderer was employed by Burgoyne. "Two parents," added he, "with their six children, were treated with the same inhumanity while quietly resting in their once happy and peaceful dwelling. Upwards of one hundred men, women, and children, have perished by the hands of the ruffians, to whom it is asserted you have paid the price of blood."

Gates showed his letter to General Lincoln and Colonel Wilkinson, who demurred to its personality; but he evidently conceived it an achievement of the pen, and spurned their criticism.*

Burgoyne, in a manly reply, declared that he would have disdained to justify himself from such rhapsodies of fiction and calumny, but that his silence might be construed into an admission of their truth, and lead to acts of retaliation. He pronounced all the intelligence cited respecting the cruelties of the Indians to be false, with the exception of the case of Miss McCrea. This he put in its true light, adding, that it had been as sincerely lamented and abhorred by him, as it could be by the tenderest of her friends. "I would not," declared he, "be conscious of the acts you presume to impute to me for the whole continent of America; though the wealth of worlds was in its bowels, and a paradise upon its surface."

* After General Gates had written his letter to Burgoyne, he called General Lincoln and myself into his apartment, read it to us, and requested our opinion of it, which we declined giving; but being pressed by him, with diffidence we concurred in judgment, that he had been too personal; to which the old gentlemen replied with his characteristic bluntness, "By G—! I don't believe either of you can mend it: and the consultation terminated.—Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 231.

We have already shown what was the real conduct of Burgoyne in this deplorable affair, and General Gates could and should have ascertained it, before "he presumed to impute" to a gallant antagonist and a humane and cultivated gentleman, such base and barbarous policy. It was the government under which Burgoyne served that was chargeable with the murderous acts of the savages. He is rather to be pitied for being obliged to employ such hell-hounds, whom he endeavored in vain to hold in check. Great Britain reaped the reward of her policy in the odium which it cast upon her cause, and the determined and successful opposition which it provoked in the American bosom.

We will now shift the scene to Washington's camp at Wilmington, where we left him watching the operations of the British fleet, and preparing to oppose the army under Sir William Howe in his designs upon Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LANDING OF HOWE'S ARMY ON ELK RIVER.—MEASURES TO CHECK IT.—EXPOSED SITUATION OF WASHINGTON IN RECONNOITERING.—ALARM OF THE COUNTRY.—PROCLAMATION OF HOWE.—ARRIVAL OF SULLIVAN.—FOREIGN OFFICERS IN CAMP.—DEBORRE.—CONWAY.—FLEURY.—COUNT PULASKI.—FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE ARMY OF "LIGHT-HORSEHARRY" OF VIRGINIA.—WASHINGTON'S APPEAL TO THE ARMY.—MOVEMENTS OF THE RIVAL FORCES.—BATTLE OF THE BRANDY-WINE.—RETREAT OF THE AMERICANS.—HALT IN CHESTER.—SCENES IN PHILADELPHIA DURING THE BATTLE.—CONGRESS ORDERS OUT MILITIA.—CLOTHES WASHINGTON WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS.—REMOVES TO LANCASTER.—REWARDS TO FOREIGN OFFICERS.

ON the 25th of August, the British army under General Howe began to land from the fleet in Elk River, at the bottom of Chesapeake Bay. The place where they landed was about six miles below the Head of Elk (now Elkton), a small town, the capital of Cecil County. This was seventy miles from Philadelphia; ten miles further from that city than they had been when encamped at Brunswick. The intervening country, too, was less open than the Jerseys, and cut up by deep streams. Sir William had chosen this circuitous route in the expectation of finding friends among the people of Cecil County, and of

the lower counties of Pennsylvania; many of whom were Quakers and noncombatants, and many persons disaffected to the patriot cause.

Early in the evening, Washington received intelligence that the enemy were landing. There was a quantity of public and private stores at the Head of Elk, which he feared would fall into their hands if they moved quickly. Every attempt was to be made to check them. The divisions of Generals Greene and Stephen were within a few miles of Wilmington; orders were sent for them to march thither immediately. The two other divisions, which had halted at Chester to refresh, were to hurry forward. Major-general Armstrong, the same who had surprised the Indian village of Kittaning, in the French war, and who now commanded the Pennsylvania militia, was urged to send down, in the cool of the night, all the men he could muster, properly armed. "The first attempt of the enemy," writes Washington, "will be with light parties to seize horses, carriages, and cattle, and we must endeavor to check them at the outset."

General Rodney, therefore, who commanded the Delaware militia, was ordered to throw out scouts and patrols toward the enemy to watch their motions; and to move near them with his troops, as soon as he should be reinforced by the Maryland militia.

Light troops were sent out early in the morning to hover about and harass the invaders. Washington himself, accompanied by General Greene and the Marquis de Lafayette and their aides, rode forth to reconnoiter the country in the neighborhood of the enemy, and determine how to dispose of his forces when they should be collected. The only eminences near Elk were Iron Hill and Gray's Hill; the latter within two miles of the enemy. It was difficult, however, to get a good view of their encampment, and judge of the number that had landed. Hours were passed in riding from place to place reconnoitering, and taking a military survey of the surrounding country. At length a severe storm drove the party to take shelter in a farm-house. Night came on dark and stormy. Washington showed no disposition to depart. His companions became alarmed for his safety; there was risk of his being surprised, being so near the enemy's camp. He was not to be moved either by advice or entreaties, but remained all night under the farmer's roof. When he left the house at daybreak, however, says Lafayette, he acknowledged his imprudence, and that the most insignificant traitor might have caused his ruin.

Indeed, he ran a similar risk to that which in the previous year had produced General Lee's catastrophe.

The country was in a great state of alarm. The inhabitants were hurrying off their most valuable effects, so that it was difficult to procure cattle and vehicles to remove the public stores. The want of horses, and the annoyances given by the American light troops, however, kept Howe from advancing promptly, and gave time for the greater part of the stores to be saved.

To allay the public alarm, Howe issued a proclamation on the 27th, promising the strictest regularity and order on the part of his army; with security of person and property to all who remained quietly at home, and pardon to those under arms, who should promptly return to their obedience. The proclamation had a quieting effect, especially among the loyalists, who abounded in these parts.

The divisions of generals Greene and Stephen were now stationed several miles in advance of Wilmington, behind White Clay Creek, about ten miles from the Head of Elk. General Smallwood and Colonel Gist had been directed by Congress to take command of the militia of Maryland, who were gathering on the western shore, and Washington sent them orders to coöperate with General Rodney and get in the rear of the enemy.

Washington now felt the want of Morgan and his riflemen, whom he had sent to assist the Northern army; to supply their place, he formed a corps of light troops, by drafting a hundred men from each brigade. The command was given to Major-general Maxwell, who was to hover about the enemy and give them continual annoyance.

The army about this time was increased by the arrival of General Sullivan and his division of three thousand men. He had recently, while encamped at Hanover in Jersey, made a gallant attempt to surprise and capture a corps of one thousand provincials stationed on Staten Island, at a distance from the fortified camp, and opposite the Jersey shore. The attempt was partially successful; a number of the provincials were captured; but the regulars came to the rescue. Sullivan had not brought sufficient boats to secure a retreat. His rear-guard was captured while waiting for the return of the boats, yet not without a sharp resistance. There was loss on both sides, but the Americans suffered most. Congress had directed Washington to appoint a court of inquiry to investigate the matter; in the meantime Sullivan, whose gallantry remained undoubted, continued in command.

There were now in camp several of those officers and gentlemen from various parts of Europe who had recently pressed

into the service, and the suitable employment of whom had been a source of much perplexity to Washington. General Deborre, the French veteran of thirty years' service, commanded a brigade in Sullivan's division. Brigadier-general Conway, the Gallicized Hibernian, was in the division of Lord Stirling. Beside these, there was Louis Fleury, a French gentleman of noble descent, who had been educated as an engineer, and had come out at the opening of the Revolution to offer his services. Washington had obtained for him a captain's commission. Another officer of distinguished merit was the Count Pulaski, a Pole, recommended by Dr. Franklin, as an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defense of the liberties of his country against Russia, Austria, and Prussia. In fact, he had been commander-in-chief of the forces of the insurgents. He served at present as a volunteer in the light horse, and as that department was still without a head, and the cavalry was a main object of attention among the military of Poland, Washington suggested to Congress the expediency of giving him the command of it. "This gentleman, we are told," writes Washington, "has been, like us, engaged in defending the liberty and independence of his country, and has sacrificed his fortune to his zeal for those objects. He derives from hence a title to our respect, that ought to operate in his favor as far as the good of the service will permit."

At this time Henry Lee of Virginia, of military renown, makes his first appearance. He was in the twenty-second year of his age, and in the preceding year had commanded a company of Virginia volunteers. He had recently signalized himself in scouting parties, harassing the enemy's pickets. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress (August 30th), writes; "This minute twenty-four British prisoners arrived, taken yesterday by Captain Lee of the light horse." His adventurous exploits soon won him notoriety, and the popular appellation of "Light-horse Harry." He was favorably noticed by Washington throughout the war. Perhaps there was something beside his bold, dashing spirit, which won him this favor. There may have been early recollections connected with it. Lee was the son of the lady who first touched Washington's heart in his schoolboy days, the one about whom he wrote rhymes at Mount Vernon and Greenway Court—his "lowland beauty."

Several days were now passed by the commander-in-chief almost continually in the saddle, reconnoitering the roads and passes, and making himself acquainted with the surrounding country; which was very much intersected by rivers and small streams, running chiefly from northwest to southeast.

He had now made up his mind to risk a battle in the open field. It is true his troops were inferior to those of the enemy in number, equipments, and discipline. Hitherto, according to Lafayette, "they had fought combats but not battles." Still those combats had given them experience; and though many of them were militia, or raw recruits, yet the divisions of the army had acquired a facility at moving in large masses, and were considerably improved in military tactics. At any rate, it would never do to let Philadelphia, at that time the capital of the States, fall without a blow. There was a carping spirit abroad; a disposition to cavil and find fault, which was prevalent in Philadelphia, and creeping into Congress; something of the nature of what had been indulged respecting General Schuyler and the army of the North. Public impatience called for a battle; it was expected even by Europe; his own valiant spirit required it, though hitherto he had been held in check by superior considerations of expediency, and by the controlling interference of Congress. Congress itself now spurred him on, and he gave way to the native ardor of his character.

The British army having effected a landing, in which by the way, it had experienced but little molestation, was formed into two divisions. One, under Sir William Howe, was stationed at Elkton, with its advanced guard at Gray's Hill, about two miles off. The other division, under General Knyphausen, was on the opposite side of the ferry, at Cecil Court House. On the third of September the enemy advanced in considerable force, with three field-pieces, moving with great caution, as the country was difficult, woody, and not well known to them. About three miles in front of White Clay Creek, their vanguard was encountered by General Maxwell and his light troops, and a severe skirmish took place. The fire of the American sharpshooters and riflemen, as usual, was very effective; but being inferior in number, and having no artillery, Maxwell was compelled to retreat across White Clay Creek, with the loss of about forty killed and wounded. The loss of the enemy was supposed to be much greater.

The main body of the American army was now encamped on the east side of Red Clay Creek, on the road leading from Elkton to Philadelphia. The light infantry were in the advance, at White Clay Creek. The armies were from eight to ten miles apart. In this position Washington determined to await the threatened attack.

On the 5th of September he made a stirring appeal to the army, in his general orders, stating the object of the enemy,

the capture of Philadelphia. They had tried it before, from the Jerseys, and had failed. He trusted they would be again disappointed. In their present attempt their all was at stake. The whole would be hazarded in a single battle. If defeated in that, they were totally undone, and the war would be at an end. Now then was the time for the most strenuous exertions. One bold stroke would free the land from rapine, devastation, and brutal outrage. "Two years," said he, "have we maintained the war, and struggled with difficulties innumerable, but the prospect has brightened. Now is the time to reap the fruit of all our toils and dangers; if we behave like men this third campaign will be our last." Washington's numerical force at this time was about fifteen thousand men, but from sickness and other causes the effective force, militia included, did not exceed eleven thousand, and most of these were indifferently armed and equipped. The strength of the British was computed at eighteen thousand men, but, it is thought, not more than fifteen thousand were brought into action.

On the 8th, the enemy advanced in two columns; one appeared preparing to attack the Americans in front, while the other extended its left up the west side of the creek, halting at Milltown, somewhat to the right of the American position. Washington now suspected an intention on the part of Sir William Howe to march by his right, suddenly pass the Brandywine, gain the heights north of that stream, and cut him off from Philadelphia. He summoned a council of war, therefore, that evening, in which it was determined immediately to change their position, and move to the river in question. By two o'clock in the morning, the army was under march, and by the next evening was encamped on the high grounds in the rear of the Brandywine. The enemy on the same evening moved to Kennet Square, about seven miles from the American position.

The Brandywine Creek, as it is called, commences with two branches, called the East and West branches, which unite in one stream, flowing from west to east about twenty-two miles, and emptying itself into the Delaware about twenty-five miles below Philadelphia. It has several fords; one called Chadd's Ford, was at that time the most practicable, and in the direct route from the enemy's camp to Philadelphia. As the principal attack was expected here, Washington made it the centre of his position, where he stationed the main body of his army, composed of Wayne's, Weedon's, and Muhlenberg's brigades, with the light infantry under Maxwell. An eminence immediately above the ford had been intrenched in the night, and was occupied by Wayne and Proctor's artillery. Weedon's

and Muhlenberg's brigades, which were Virginian troops, and formed General Greene's division, were posted in the rear of the heights, as a reserve to aid either wing of the army. With these Washington took his stand. Maxwell's light infantry were thrown in the advance, south of the Brandywine, and posted on high ground, each side of the road leading to the ford.

The right wing of the army, commanded by Sullivan, and composed of his division and those of Stephen and Stirling, extended up the Brandywine two miles beyond Washington's position. Its light troops and videttes were distributed quite up to the forks. A few detachments of ill-organized and undisciplined cavalry extended across the creek on the extreme right. The left wing, composed of the Pennsylvania militia, under Major-General Armstrong, was stationed about a mile and a half below the main body, to protect the lower fords, where the least danger was apprehended. The Brandywine, which ran in front of the whole line, was now the only obstacle, if such it might be called, between the two armies.

Early on the morning of the 11th, a great column of troops was descried advancing on the road leading to Chadd's Ford. A skirt of woods concealed its force, but it was supposed to be the main body of the enemy; if so, a general conflict was at hand.

The Americans were immediately drawn out in order of battle. Washington rode along the front of the ranks, and was everywhere received with acclamations. A sharp firing of small arms soon told that Maxwell's light infantry were engaged with the vanguard of the enemy. The skirmishing was kept up for some time with spirit, when Maxwell was driven across the Brandywine below the ford. The enemy, who had advanced but slowly, did not attempt to follow, but halted on commanding ground and appeared to reconnoiter the American position with a view to an attack. A heavy cannonading commenced on both sides, about ten o'clock. The enemy made repeated dispositions to force the ford, which brought on as frequent skirmishes on both sides of the river, for detachments of the light troops occasionally crossed over. One of these skirmishes was more than usually severe; the British flank-guard was closely pressed, a captain and ten or fifteen men were killed, and the guard was put to flight; but a large force came to their assistance, and the Americans were again driven across the stream. All this while there was the noise and uproar of a battle, but little of the reality. The enemy made a great thundering of cannon, but no vigorous onset, and Colonel Harrison, Washington's "old secre-

tary," seeing this cautious and dilatory conduct on their part, wrote a hurried note to Congress, expressing his confident belief that the enemy would be repulsed.

Towards noon came an express from Sullivan, with a note received from a scouting party, reporting that General Howe, with a large body of troops and a park of artillery, was pushing up the Lancaster road, doubtless to cross at the upper fords and turn the right flank of the American position.

Startled by the information, Washington instantly sent off Colonel Theodoric Bland, with a party of horse, to reconnoiter above the forks and ascertain the truth of the report. In the meantime, he resolved to cross the ford, attack the division in front of him with his whole force, and rout it before the other could arrive. He gave orders for both wings to cooperate, when, as Sullivan was preparing to cross, Major Spicer of the militia rode up, just from the forks, and assured him there was no enemy in that quarter. Sullivan instantly transmitted the intelligence to Washington, whereupon the movement was suspended until positive information could be obtained. After a time came a man of the neighborhood, Thomas Cheyney by name, spurring in all haste, the mare he rode in foam, and himself out of breath. Dashing up to the commander-in-chief, he informed him that he must instantly move, or he would be surrounded. He had come upon the enemy unawares; had been pursued and fired upon, but the fleetness of his mare had saved him. The main body of the British was coming down on the east side of the stream, and was near at hand. Washington replied, that from information just received, it could not be so. "You are mistaken, general," replied the other vehemently; "my life for it, you are mistaken." Then reiterating the fact with an oath, and making a draft of the road in the sand, "put me under guard," added he, "until you find my story true."

Another despatch from Sullivan corroborated it. Colonel Bland, whom Washington had sent to reconnoiter above the forks, had seen the enemy two miles in the rear of Sullivan's right, marching down at a rapid rate, while a cloud of dust showed that there were more troops behind them.

In fact, the old Long Island stratagem had been played over again. Knyphausen with a small division had engrossed the attention of the Americans by a feigned attack at Chadd's Ford, kept up with great noise and prolonged by skirmishes; while the main body of the army under Cornwallis, led by experienced guides, had made a circuit of seventeen miles, crossed the two forks of the Brandywine, and arrived in the neighborhood of Birmingham meeting-house, two miles to the right of

Sullivan. It was a capital stratagem, secretly and successfully conducted.

Finding that Cornwallis had thus gained the rear of the army, Washington sent orders to Sullivan to oppose him with the whole right wing, each brigade attacking as soon as it arrived upon the ground. Wayne, in the meantime, was to keep Knyphausen at bay at the ford, and Greene, with the reserve, to hold himself ready to give aid wherever required.

Lafayette, as a volunteer, had hitherto accompanied the commander-in-chief, but now, seeing there was likely to be warm work with the right wing, he obtained permission to join Sullivan, and spurred off with his aide-de-camp to the scene of action. From his narrative, we gather some of the subsequent details.

Sullivan, on receiving Washington's orders, advanced with his own, Stephen's, and Stirling's divisions, and began to form a line in front of an open piece of wood. The time which had been expended in transmitting intelligence, receiving orders, and marching, had enabled Cornwallis to choose his ground and prepare for action. Still more time was given him from the apprehension of the three generals, upon consultation, of being outflanked upon the right; and that the gap between Sullivan's and Stephen's divisions was too wide, and should be closed up. Orders were accordingly given for the whole line to move to the right; and while in execution, Cornwallis advanced rapidly with his troops in the finest order, and opened a brisk fire of musketry and artillery. The Americans made an obstinate resistance, but being taken at a disadvantage, the right and left wings were broken and driven into the woods. The centre stood firm for a while, but being exposed to the whole fire of the enemy, gave way at length also. The British, in following up their advantage, got entangled in the wood. It was here that Lafayette received his wound. He had thrown himself from his horse and was endeavoring to rally the troops, when he was shot through the leg with a musket ball, and had to be assisted into the saddle by his aide-de-camp.

The Americans rallied on a height to the north of Dilworth, and made a still more spirited resistance than at first, but were again dislodged and obliged to retreat with a heavy loss.

While this was occurring with the right wing, Knyphausen, as soon as he learnt from the heavy firing that Cornwallis was engaged, made a push to force his way across Chadd's Ford in earnest. He was vigorously opposed by Wayne with Proctor's artillery, aided by Maxwell and his infantry. Greene was preparing to second him with the reserve, when he was summoned

by Washington to the support of the right wing, which the commander-in-chief had found in imminent peril.

Greene advanced to the relief with such celerity, that it is said, on good authority, his division accomplished the march, or rather run, of five miles, in less than fifty minutes. He arrived too late to save the battle, but in time to protect the broken masses of the right wing, which he met in full flight. Opening his ranks from time to time for the fugitives, and closing them the moment they had passed, he covered their retreat by a sharp and well-directed fire from his field-pieces. His grand stand was made at a place about a mile beyond Dilworth, which, in reconnoitering the neighborhood, Washington had pointed out to him, as well calculated for a second position, should the army be driven out of the first; and here he was overtaken by Colonel Pinckney, an aide-de-camp of the commander-in-chief, ordering him to occupy this position and protect the retreat of the army. The orders were implicitly obeyed. Weedon's brigade was drawn up in a narrow defile, flanked on both sides by woods, and perfectly commanding the road; while Greene, with Muhlenberg's brigade, passing to the right took his station on the road. The British came on impetuously, expecting but faint opposition. They met with a desperate resistance, and were repeatedly driven back. It was the bloody conflict of the bayonet; deadly on either side, and lasting for a considerable time. Weedon's brigade on the left maintained its stand also with great obstinacy, and the check given to the enemy by these two brigades, allowed time for the broken troops to retreat. Weedon's was at length compelled by superior numbers to seek the protection of the other brigade, which he did in good order, and Greene gradually drew off the whole division in face of the enemy, who, checked by this vigorous resistance, and seeing the day far spent, gave up all further pursuit.

The brave stand made by these brigades had, likewise, been a great protection to Wayne. He had for a long time withstood the attacks of the enemy at Chadd's Ford, until the approach, on the right, of some of the enemy's troops who had been entangled in the woods, showed him that the right wing had been routed. He now gave up the defense of his post, and retreated by the Chester road. Knyphausen's troops were too fatigued to pursue him; and the others had been kept back, as we have shown, by Greene's division. So ended the varied conflict of the day.

Lafayette gives an animated picture of the general retreat, in which he became entangled. He had endeavored to rejoin

Washington, but loss of blood compelled him to stop and have his wound bandaged. While thus engaged, he came near being captured. All around him was headlong terror and confusion. Chester road, the common retreat of the broken fragments of the army, from every quarter, was crowded with fugitives, with cannon, with baggage cars, all hurrying forward pell-mell, and obstructing each other; while the thundering of cannon, and volleying of musketry by the contending parties in the rear, added to the confusion and panic of the flight.

The dust, the uproar, and the growing darkness, threw everything into chaos; there was nothing but a headlong struggle forward. At Chester, however, twelve miles from the field of battle, there was a deep stream with a bridge, over which the fugitives would have to pass. Here Lafayette set a guard to prevent their further flight. The commander-in-chief, arriving soon after with Greene and his gallant division, some degree of order was restored, and the whole army took its post behind Chester for the night.

The scene of this battle, which decided the fate of Philadelphia, was within six-and-twenty miles of that city, and each discharge of cannon could be heard there. The two parties of the inhabitants, whig and tory, were to be seen in groups in the squares and public places, waiting the event in anxious silence. At length a courier arrived. His tidings spread consternation among the friends of liberty. Many left their homes; entire families abandoned everything in terror and despair, and took refuge in the mountains. Congress, the same evening determined to quit the city and repair to Lancaster, whence they subsequently removed to Yorktown. Before leaving Philadelphia, however, they summoned the militia of Pennsylvania, and the adjoining States, to join the main army without delay; and ordered down fifteen hundred continental troops from Putnam's command on the Hudson. They also clothed Washington with power to suspend officers for misbehavior; to fill up all vacancies under the rank of brigadiers; to take all provisions, and other articles necessary for the use of the army, paying, or giving certificates for the same; and to remove, or secure for the benefit of the owners, all goods and effects which might otherwise fall into the hands of the enemy and be serviceable to them. These extraordinary powers were limited to the circumference of seventy miles round head-quarters, and were to continue in force sixty days, unless sooner revoked by Congress.

It may be as well here to notice in advance, the conduct of Congress towards some of the foreigners who had mingled in this battle. Count Pulaski, the Polish nobleman, heretofore

mentioned, who acted with great spirit as a volunteer in the light horse, riding up within pistol shot of the enemy to reconnoiter, was given a command of cavalry with the rank of brigadier-general. Captain Louis Fleury, also, who had acquitted himself with gallantry, and rendered essential aid in rallying the troops, having had a horse killed under him was presented by Congress with another, as a testimonial of their sense of his merit.

Lafayette speaks, in his memoirs, of the brilliant manner in which General Conway, the chevalier of St. Louis, acquitted himself at the head of eight hundred men, in the encounter with the troops of Cornwallis near Birmingham meeting-house. The veteran Deborre was not equally fortunate in gaining distinction on this occasion. In the awkward change of position in the line when in front of the enemy, he had been the first to move, and without waiting for orders. The consequence was, his brigade fell into confusion, and was put to flight. He endeavored to rally it, and was wounded in the attempt; but his efforts were in vain. Congress ordered a court of inquiry on his conduct, whereupon he resigned his commission, and returned to France, complaining bitterly of his hard treatment. "It was not his fault," he said, "if American troops would run away,"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

GENERAL HOWE NEGLECTS TO PURSUE HIS ADVANTAGE.—WASHINGTON RETREATS TO GERMANTOWN.—RECROSSES THE SCHUYLKILL AND PREPARES FOR ANOTHER ACTION.—PREVENTED BY STORMS OF RAIN.—RETREATS TO FRENCH CREEK.—WAYNE DETACHED TO FALL ON THE ENEMY'S REAR.—HIS PICKET SURPRISED.—MASSACRE OF WAYNE'S MEN.—MANŒUVRES OF HOWE ON THE SCHUYLKILL.—WASHINGTON SENDS FOR REINFORCEMENTS.—HOWE MARCHES INTO PHILADELPHIA.

NOTWITHSTANDING the route and precipitate retreat of the American army, Sir William Howe did not press the pursuit, but, passed the night on the field of battle, and remained the two following days at Dilworth, sending out detachments to take post at Concord and Chester, and seize on Wilmington, whither the sick and wounded were conveyed. "Had the enemy marched directly to Derby," observes Lafayette, "the American army would have been cut up and destroyed; they

lost a precious night, and it is perhaps the greatest fault in a war in which they have committed many."*

Washington, as usual, profited by the inactivity of Howe; quietly retreating through Derby (on the 12th) across the Schuylkill to Germantown, within a short distance of Philadelphia, where he gave his troops a day's repose. Finding them in good spirits, and in nowise disheartened by the recent affair, which they seemed to consider a check rather than a defeat, he resolved to seek the enemy again and give him battle. As preliminary measures, he left some of the Pennsylvania militia in Philadelphia to guard the city; others, under General Armstrong, were posted at the various passes of the Schuylkill, with orders to throw up works; the floating bridge on the lower road was to be unmoored, and the boats collected and taken across the river.

Having taken these precautions against any hostile movement by the lower road, Washington recrossed the Schuylkill on the 14th, and advanced along the Lancaster road, with the intention of turning the left flank of the enemy. Howe, apprised of his intention, made a similar disposition to outflank him. The two armies came in sight of each other, near the Warren Tavern, twenty-three miles from Philadelphia, and were on the point of engaging, but were prevented by a violent storm of rain, which lasted for four-and-twenty hours.

This inclement weather was particularly distressing to the Americans, who were scantily clothed, most of them destitute of blankets, and separated from their tents and baggage. The rain penetrated their cartridge-boxes and the ill-fitted locks of their muskets, rendering the latter useless, being deficient in bayonets. In this plight, Washington gave up for the present all thought of attacking the enemy, as their discipline in the use of the bayonet, with which they were universally furnished, would give them a great superiority in action. "The hot-headed politicians," writes one of his officers, "will no doubt censure this part of his conduct, while the more judicious will approve it, as not only expedient, but, in such a case, highly commendable. It was, without doubt, chagrining to a person of his fine feelings, to retreat before an enemy not more in number than himself; yet, with a true greatness of spirit, he sacrificed them to the good of his country."† There was evidently a growing disposition again to criticise Washington's movements, yet how well did this officer judge of him.

The only aim, at present, was to get some dry and secure

* *Memoirs*, tom. i. p. 26.

† *Memoirs of Major Samuel Shaw*, by Hon. Josiah Quincy.

place, where the army might repose and refit. All day, and for a great part of the night, they marched under a cold and pelting rain, and through deep and miry roads, to the Yellow Springs, thence to Warwick, on French Creek; a weary march in stormy weather for troops destitute of every comfort, and nearly a thousand of them actually barefooted. At Warwick furnace, ammunition and a few muskets were obtained, to aid in disputing the passage of the Schuylkill, and the advance of the enemy on Philadelphia.

From French Creek, Wayne was detached with his division, to get in the rear of the enemy, form a junction with General Smallwood and the Maryland militia, and keeping themselves concealed, watch for an opportunity to cut off Howe's baggage and hospital train; in the meantime, Washington crossed the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford, and took a position to defend that pass of the river.

Wayne set off in the night, and, by a circuitous march, got within three miles of the left wing of the British encamped at Tredyffrin, and concealing himself in a wood, waited the arrival of Smallwood and his militia. At daybreak he reconnoitered the camp, where Howe, checked by the severity of the weather, had contented himself with uniting his columns, and remained under shelter. All day Wayne hovered about the camp; there were no signs of marching; all kept quiet, but lay too compact to be attacked with prudence. He sent repeated messages to Washington, describing the situation of the enemy, and urging him to come on and attack them in their camp. "Their supineness," said he, in one of his notes, "answers every purpose of giving you time to get up: if they attempt to move, I shall attack them at all events. . . . There never was, nor never will be, a finer opportunity of giving the enemy a fatal blow than at present. For God's sake push on as fast as possible."

Again, at a later hour, he writes: "The enemy are very quiet, washing and cooking. I expect General Maxwell on the left flank every moment, and, as I lay on the right, we only want you in their rear to complete Mr. Howe's business. I believe he knows nothing of my situation, as I have taken every precaution to prevent any intelligence getting to him, at the same time keeping a watchful eye on his front, flanks, and rear."

His motions, however, had not been so secret as he imagined. He was in a part of the country full of the disaffected, and Sir William had received accurate information of his force and where he was encamped. General Grey, with a strong detach-

ment, was sent to surprise him at night in his lair. Late in the evening, when Wayne had set his pickets and sentinels, and thrown out his patrols, a countryman brought him word of the meditated attack. He doubted the intelligence, but strengthened his pickets and patrols, and ordered his troops to sleep upon their arms.

At eleven o'clock, the pickets were driven in at the point of the bayonet—the enemy were advancing in column. Wayne instantly took post on the right of his position, to cover the retreat of the left, led by Colonel Humpton, the second in command. The latter was tardy, and incautiously paraded his troops in front of their fires, so as to be in full relief. The enemy rushed on without firing a gun: all was the silent, but deadly work of the bayonet and the cutlass. Nearly three hundred of Humpton's men were killed or wounded, and the rest put to flight. Wayne gave the enemy some well-directed volleys, and then retreating to a small distance, rallied his troops, and prepared for further defense. The British, however, contented themselves with the blow they had given, and retired with very little loss, taking with them between seventy and eighty prisoners, several of them officers, and eight baggage wagons heavily laden.

General Smallwood, who was to have coöperated with Wayne, was within a mile of him at the time of his attack; and would have hastened to his assistance with his well-known intrepidity; but he had not the corps under his command with which he had formerly distinguished himself, and his raw militia fled in a panic at the first sight of a return party of the enemy.

Wayne was deeply mortified by the result of this affair, and, finding it severely criticised in the army, demanded a court-martial, which pronounced his conduct everything that was to be expected from an active, brave, and vigilant officer; whatever blame there was in the matter fell upon his second in command, who, by delay, or misapprehension of orders, and an unskillful position of his troops, had exposed them to be massacred.

On the 21st, Sir William Howe made a rapid march high up the Schuylkill, on the road leading to Reading, as if he intended either to capture the military stores deposited there, or to turn the right of the American army. Washington kept pace with him on the opposite side of the river, up to Pott's Grove, about thirty miles from Philadelphia.

The movement on the part of Howe was a mere feint. No sooner had he drawn Washington so far up the river, than, by a rapid countermarch on the night of the 22d, he got to the ford below, threw his troops across on the next morning, and

pushed forward for Philadelphia. By the time Washington was apprised of this counter-movement, Howe was too far on his way to be overtaken by harassed, barefooted troops, worn out by constant marching. Feeling the necessity of immediate reinforcements, he wrote on the same day to Putnam at Peekskill: "The situation of our affairs in this quarter calls for every aid and for every effort. I therefore desire that, without a moment's loss of time, you will detach as many effective rank and file under proper generals and officers, as will make the whole number, including those with General McDougall, amount to twenty-five hundred privates and non-commissioned fit for duty.

"I must urge you, by every motive, to send this detachment without the least possible delay. No considerations are to prevent it. It is our first object to defeat, if possible, the army now opposed to us here."

On the next day (24th) he wrote also to General Gates. "This army has not been able to oppose General Howe's with the success that was wished, and needs a reinforcement. I therefore request, if you have been so fortunate as to oblige General Burgoyne to retreat to Ticonderoga, or if you have not, and circumstances will admit, that you will order Colonel Morgan to join me again with his corps. I sent him up when I thought you materially wanted him; and, if his services can be dispensed with now, you will direct his immediate return."

Having called a council of officers and taken their opinions, which concurred with his own, Washington determined to remain some days at Pott's Grove, to give repose to his troops, and await the arrival of reinforcements.

Sir William Howe halted at Germantown, within a short distance of Philadelphia, and encamped the main body of his army in and about that village; detaching Lord Cornwallis with a large force and a number of officers of distinction, to take formal possession of the city. That general marched into Philadelphia on the 26th, with a brilliant staff and escort, and followed by splendid legions of British and Hessian grenadiers, long trains of artillery and squadrons of light dragoons, the finest troops in the army, all in their best array; stepping to the swelling music of the band playing "God save the King," and presenting with their scarlet uniforms, their glittering arms and flaunting feathers, a striking contrast to the poor patriot troops, who had recently passed through the same streets, weary and wayworn, and happy if they could cover their raggedness with a brown linen hunting-frock, and decorate their caps with a sprig of evergreen.

In this way the British took possession of the city, so long the object of their awkward attempts, and regarded by them as a triumphant acquisition, having been the seat of the general government, the capital of the confederacy. Washington maintained his characteristic equanimity. "This is an event," writes he to Governor Trumbull, "which we have reason to wish had not happened, and which will be attended with several ill consequences; but I hope it will not be so detrimental as many apprehend, and that a little time and perseverance will give us some favorable opportunity of recovering our loss, and of putting our affairs in a more flourishing condition."

He had heard of the prosperous situation of affairs in the Northern department, and the repeated checks given to the enemy. "I flatter myself," writes he, "we shall soon hear that they have been succeeded by other fortunate and interesting events, as the two armies, by General Gates' letter were encamped near each other."

We will now revert to the course of the campaign in that quarter, the success of which he trusted would have a beneficial influence on the operations in which he was personally engaged. Indeed the operations in the Northern department formed, as we have shown, but a part of his general scheme, and were constantly present to his thoughts. His generals had each his own individual enterprise, or his own department to think about; Washington had to think for the whole.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DUBIOUS POSITION OF BURGOYNE.—COLLECTS HIS FORCES.—LADIES OF DISTINCTION IN HIS CAMP.—LADY HARRIET ACKLAND.—THE BARONESS DE RIEDESEL.—AMERICAN ARMY REINFORCED.—SILENT MOVEMENTS OF BURGOYNE.—WATCHED FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE HILLS.—HIS MARCH ALONG THE HUDSON.—POSITION OF THE TWO CAMPS.—BATTLE OF THE 19TH SEPTEMBER.—BURGOYNE ENCAMPS NEARER.—FORTIFIES HIS CAMP.—PROMISED CO-OPERATION BY SIR HENRY CLINTON.—DETERMINES TO AWAIT IT.—QUARREL BETWEEN GATES AND ARNOLD.—ARNOLD DEPRIVED OF COMMAND.—BURGOYNE WAITS FOR CO-OPERATION.

THE checks which Burgoyne had received on the right and left, and, in a great measure, through the spontaneous rising of the country, had opened his eyes to the difficulties of his situ-

ation, and the errors as to public feeling into which he had been led by his tory counselors. "The great bulk of the country is undoubtedly with the Congress in principle and zeal," writes he, "and their measures are executed with a secrecy and despatch that are not to be equaled. Wherever the king's forces point, militia, to the amount of three or four thousand, assemble in twenty-four hours: *they bring with them their subsistence, etc., and, the alarm over, they return to their farms.* The Hampshire Grants, in particular, a country unpeopled and almost unknown last war, now abounds in the most active and most rebellious race of the continent, and hangs like a gathering storm upon my left." What a picture this gives of a patriotic and warlike yeomanry. He complains, too, that no operation had yet been undertaken in his favor; the Highlands of the Hudson had not even been threatened; the consequence was that two brigades had been detached from them to strengthen the army of Gates, strongly posted near the mouth of the Mohawk River, with a superior force of continental troops, and as many militia as he pleased.

Burgoyne declared, that had he any latitude in his orders, he would remain where he was, or perhaps fall back to Fort Edward, where his communication with Lake George would be secure, and wait for some event that might assist his movement forward; his orders, however, were positive to force a junction with Sir William Howe. He did not feel at liberty, therefore, to remain inactive longer than would be necessary to receive the reinforcements of the additional companies, the German drafts and recruits actually on Lake Champlain, and to collect provisions enough for twenty-five days. These reinforcements were indispensable, because, from the hour he should pass the Hudson River and proceed towards Albany, all safety of communication would cease.

"I yet do not despair," adds he, manfully. "Should I succeed in forcing my way to Albany, and find that country in a state to subsist my army, I shall think no more of a retreat, but, at the worst, fortify there, and await Sir William's operations."*

A feature of peculiar interest is given to this wild and rugged expedition, by the presence of two ladies of rank and refinement, involved in its perils and hardships. One was Lady Harriet Ackland, daughter of the Earl of Ilchester, and wife of Major Ackland of the grenadiers; the other was the Baroness De Riedesel, wife of the Hessian major-general. Both of these ladies had been left behind in Canada. Lady Harriet,

* Letter to Lord George Germaine.

however, on hearing that her husband was wounded in the affair at Hubbardton, instantly set out to rejoin him, regardless of danger, and of her being in a condition before long to become a mother.

Crossing the whole length of Lake Champlain, she found him in a sick bed at Skenesborough. After his recovery, she refused to leave him, but had continued with the army ever since. Her example had been imitated by the Baroness De Riedesel, who had joined the army at Fort Edward, bringing with her her three small children. The friendship and sympathy of these two ladies in all scenes of trial and suffering, and their devoted attachment to their husbands, afford touching episodes in the story of the campaign. When the army was on the march, they followed a little distance in the rear, Lady Harriet in a two-wheeled tumbril, the Baroness in a calash, capable of holding herself, her children and two servants. The latter has left a journal of her campaigning, which we may occasionally cite. "They moved," she says, "in the midst of soldiery, who were full of animation, singing camp songs, and panting for action. They had to travel through almost impassable woods; in a picturesque and beautiful region; but which was almost abandoned by its inhabitant, who had hastened to join the American army." "They added much to its strength," observes she, "as they were all good marksmen, and the love of their country inspired them with more than ordinary courage." *

The American army had received various reinforcements: the most efficient was Morgan's corps of riflemen, sent by Washington. He had also furnished it with artillery. It was now about ten thousand strong. Schuyler, finding himself and his proffered services slighted by Gates, had returned to Albany. His patriotism was superior to personal resentments. He still continued to promote the success of the campaign, exerting his influence over the Indian tribes, to win them from the enemy. At Albany he held talks and warfeasts with deputations of Oneida, Tuscarora, and Onondaga warriors; and procured scouting parties of them, which he sent to the camp, and which proved of great service. His former aide-de-camp, Colonel Brockholst Livingston, and his secretary, Colonel Varick, remained in camp, and kept him informed by letter of passing occurrences. They were much about the person of General Arnold, who, since his return from relieving Fort Stanwix, commanded the left wing of the army. Livingston, in fact, was with him as aide-de-camp. The jealousy of Gates was

* Riedesel's *Memoirs*.

awakened by these circumstances. He knew their attachment to Schuyler, and suspected they were prejudicing the mind of Arnold against him; and this suspicion may have been the origin of a coolness and neglect which he soon evinced toward Arnold himself. These young officers, however, though devotedly attached to Schuyler from a knowledge of his generous character, were above any camp intrigue. Livingston was again looking forward with youthful ardor to a brush with the enemy; but regretted that his former chief would not be there to lead it. "Burgoyne," writes he to Schuyler exultingly, "is in such a situation that he can neither advance nor retire without fighting. A capital battle must soon be fought. I am chagrined to the soul when I think that another person will reap the fruits of your labors." *

Colonel Varick, equally eager, was afraid Burgoyne might be decamping. "His evening guns," writes he, "are seldom heard, and when heard, are very low in sound." †

The dense forests, in fact, which covered the country between the hostile armies, concealed their movements, and as Gates threw out no harassing parties, his information concerning the enemy was vague. Burgoyne, however, was diligently collecting all his forces from Skenesborough, Fort Anne and Fort George, and collecting provisions; he had completed a bridge by which he intended to pass the Hudson, and force his way to Albany, where he expected coöperation from below. Everything was conducted with as much silence and caution as possible. His troops paraded without beat of drum, and evening guns were discontinued. So stood matters on the 11th of September, when a report was circulated in the American camp, that Burgoyne was in motion, and that he had made a speech to his soldiers, telling them that the fleet had returned to Canada, and their only safety was to fight their way to New York.

As General Gates was to *receive* an attack, it was thought he ought to choose the ground where to receive it; Arnold, therefore, in company with Kosciuszko, the Polish engineer, reconnoitered the neighborhood in quest of a good camping-ground, and at length fixed upon a ridge of hills called Bemis's Heights, which Kosciuszko proceeded to fortify.

In the meantime Colonel Colburn was sent off with a small party to ascend the high hills on the east side of the Hudson, and watch the movements of the enemy with glasses from their summits, or from the tops of the trees. For three days he kept thus on the look-out, sending word from time to time to camp of all that he espied.

* MS. Letter to Schuyler.

† Ibid.

On the 11th there were the first signs of movement among Burgoyne's troops. On the 13th and 14th, they slowly passed over a bridge of boats, which they had thrown across the Hudson, and encamped near Fish Creek. Colburn counted eight hundred tents, including marquees. A mile in advance were fourteen more tents. The Hessians remained encamped on the eastern side of the river, but intervening woods concealed the number of their tents. There was not the usual stir of military animation in the camps. There were no evening nor morning guns.

On the 15th, both English and Hessian camps struck their tents, and loaded their baggage wagons. By twelve o'clock both began to march. Colburn neglected to notice the route taken by the Hessians; his attention was absorbed by the British, who made their way slowly and laboriously down the western side of the river, along a wretched road intersected by brooks and rivulets, the bridges over which Schuyler had broken down. The division had with it eighty-five baggage wagons and a great train of artillery; with two unwieldy twenty-four pounders, acting like drag-anchors. It was a silent, dogged march, without beat of drum, or spirit-stirring bray of trumpet. A body of light troops, new levies, and Indians, painted and decorated for war, struck off from the rest and disappeared in the forest, up Fish Creek. From the great silence observed by Burgoyne in his movements, and the care he took in keeping his men together, and allowing no straggling parties, Colonel Colburn apprehended that he meditated an attack. Having seen the enemy advance two miles on its march, therefore, he descended from the heights, and hastened to the American camp to make his report. A British prisoner, brought in soon afterwards, stated that Burgoyne had come to a halt about four miles distant.

On the following morning, the army was under arms at daylight; the enemy, however, remained encamped, repairing bridges in front, and sending down guard boats to reconnoiter; the Americans, therefore, went on to fortify their position. The ridge of hills called Bemis's Heights, rises abruptly from the narrow flats bordering the west side of the river. Kosciuszko had fortified the camp with intrenchments three-quarters of a mile in extent, having redoubts and batteries, which commanded the valley, and even the hills on the opposite side of the river; for the Hudson, in this upper part, is comparatively a narrow stream. From the foot of the heights, an intrenchment extended to the river, ending with a battery at the water edge, commanding a floating bridge.

The right wing of the army, under the immediate command of Gates, and composed of Glover's, Nixon's, and Patterson's brigades, occupied the brow of the hill nearest to the river, with the flats below.

The left wing, commanded by Arnold, was on the side of the camp furthest from the river, and distant from the latter about three-quarters of a mile. It was composed of the New Hampshire brigade of General Poor, Pierre Van Courtlandt's and James Livingston's regiments of New York militia, Morgan's riflemen, and Dearborn's infantry. The centre was composed of Massachusetts and New York troops.

Burgoyne gradually drew nearer to the camp, throwing out large parties of pioneers and workmen. The Americans disputed every step. A Hessian officer observes: "The enemy bristled up his hair, as we attempted to repair more bridges. At last, we had to do him the honor of sending out whole regiments to protect our workmen." *

It was Arnold who provoked this honor. At the head of fifteen hundred men he skirmished bravely with the superior force sent out against him, and retired with several prisoners.

Burgoyne now encamped about two miles from General Gates, disposing his army in two lines; the left on the river, the right extending at right angles to it, about six hundred yards, across the low grounds to a range of steep and rocky hills, occupied by the *élite*; a ravine formed by a rivulet from the hills passed in front of the camp. The low ground between the armies was cultivated; the hills were covered with woods, excepting three or four small openings and deserted farms. Beside the ravines which fronted each camp there was a third one, midway between them, also at right angles to the river.†

On the morning of the 19th, General Gates received intelligence that the enemy were advancing in great force on his left. It was, in fact, their right wing, composed of the British line and led by Burgoyne in person. It was covered by the grenadiers and light infantry under General Fraser and Colonel Breyman, who kept along the high grounds on the right; while they, in turn, were covered in front and on the flanks by Indians, provincial royalists, and Canadians. The left wing and artillery were advancing at the same time, under Major-generals Phillips and Riedesel, along the great road and meadows by the river side, but they were retarded by the necessity of repairing broken bridges. It was the plan of Burgoyne, that the Canadians and Indians should attack the central outposts of the

* Schläzer's *Briefwechsel*.
Wilkinson's *Memoirs* i. 230.

Americans, and draw their attention in that direction, while he and Fraser, making a circuit through the woods, should join forces and fall upon the rear of the American camp. As the dense forests hid them from each other, signal guns were to regulate their movements. Three, fired in succession, were to denote that all was ready, and be the signal for an attack in front, flank, and rear.

The American pickets, stationed along the ravine of Mill Creek, sent repeated accounts to General Gates of the movements of the enemy; but he remained quiet in his camp, as if determined to await an attack. The American officers grew impatient. Arnold especially, impetuous by nature, urged repeatedly that a detachment should be sent forth to check the enemy in their advance and drive the Indians out of the woods. At length he succeeded in getting permission, about noon, to detach Morgan with his riflemen and Dearborn with his infantry from his division. They soon fell in with the Canadians and Indians, which formed the advance guard of the enemy's right, and attacking them with spirit, drove them in, or rather dispersed them. Morgan's riflemen, following up their advantage with too much eagerness, became likewise scattered, and a strong reinforcement of royalists arriving on the scene of action, the Americans, in their turn, were obliged to give way.

Other detachments now arrived from the American camp, led by Arnold, who attacked Fraser on his right to check his attempt to get in the rear of the camp. Finding the position of Fraser too strong to be forced, he sent to head-quarters for reinforcements, but they were refused by Gates, who declared that no more should go; "he would not suffer his camp to be exposed."* The reason he gave was that it might be attacked by the enemy's left wing.

Arnold now made a rapid counter-march, and, his movement being masked by the woods, suddenly attempted to turn Fraser's left. Here he came in full conflict with the British line, and threw himself upon it with a boldness and impetuosity that for a time threatened to break it, and cut the wings of the army asunder. The grenadiers and Breyman's riflemen hastened to its support. General Phillips broke his way through the woods with four pieces of artillery, and Riedesel came on with his heavy dragoons. Reinforcements came likewise to Arnold's assistance; his force, however, never exceeded three thousand men, and with these, for nearly four hours, he kept up a conflict, almost hand to hand, with the whole right wing of the British army. Part of the time the Americans had the advan-

* Colonel Varick to Schuyler. *Schuyler's Papers.*

tage of fighting under the cover of a wood, so favorable to their militia and sharpshooters. Burgoyne ordered the woods to be cleared by the bayonet. His troops rushed forward in columns with a hurrah! The Americans kept within their intrenchments, and repeatedly repulsed them; but if they pursued their advantage, and advanced into open field, they were in their turn driven back.

Night alone put an end to the conflict, which the British acknowledged to have been the most obstinate and hardly fought they had ever experienced in America. Both parties claimed the victory. But, though the British remained on the field of battle, where they lay all night upon their arms, they had failed in their object; they had been assailed instead of being the assailants; while the American troops had accomplished the purpose for which they had sallied forth; had checked the advance of the enemy, frustrated their plan of attack, and returned exulting to their camp. Their loss, in killed and wounded, was between three and four hundred, including several officers; that of the enemy upwards of five hundred.

Burgoyne gives an affecting picture of the situation of the ladies of rank already mentioned, during this action. Lady Harriet had been directed by her husband, Major Ackland, to follow the route of the artillery and baggage, which was not exposed. "At the time the action began," writes Burgoyne, "she found herself near a small uninhabited hut, where she alighted. When it was found the action was becoming general and bloody, the surgeons of the hospital took possession of the same place, as the most convenient for the first care of the wounded. Thus was the lady in hearing of one continual fire of cannon and musketry, for four hours together, with the presumption, from the post of her husband, at the head of the grenadiers, that he was in the most exposed part of the action. She had three female companions, the Baroness of Riedesel, and the wives of two British officers, Major Harnage and Lieutenant Reynell; but in the event their presence served but little for comfort. Major Harnage was soon brought to the surgeons very badly wounded; and in a little time after came intelligence that Lieutenant Reynell was shot dead. Imagination wants no helps to figure the state of the whole group."

Arnold was excessively indignant at Gates' withholding the reinforcements he had required in the heat of the action; had they been furnished, he said he might have severed the line of the enemy and gained a complete victory. He was urgent to resume the action on the succeeding morning, and follow up the

advantage he had gained, but Gates declined, to his additional annoyance. He attributed the refusal to pique or jealousy, but Gates subsequently gave as a reason the great deficiency of powder and ball in the camp, which was known only to himself, and which he kept secret until a supply was sent from Albany.

Burgoyne now strengthened his position with intrenchments and batteries, part of them across the meadows which bordered the river, part on the brow of the heights which commanded them. The Americans likewise extended and strengthened their line of breastworks on the left of the camp; the right was already unassailable. The camps were within gunshot, but with ravines and woods between them.

Washington's predictions of the effect to be produced by Morgan's riflemen approached fulfillment. The Indians, dismayed at the severe treatment experienced from these veteran bush fighters, were disappearing from the British camp. The Canadians and royal provincials, "mere trimmers," as Burgoyne called them, were deserting in great numbers, and he had no confidence in those who remained.

His situation was growing more and more critical. On the 21st, he heard shouts in the American camp, and in a little while their cannon thundered a *feu de joie*. News had been received from General Lincoln, that a detachment of New England troops under Colonel Brown had surprised the carrying-place, mills, and French lines at Ticonderoga, captured an armed sloop, gunboats, and bateaux, made three hundred prisoners, beside releasing one hundred American captives, and were laying siege to Fort Independence.*

Fortunately for Burgoyne, while affairs were darkening in the North, a ray of hope dawned from the South. While the shouts from the American camp were yet ringing in his ears, came a letter in cipher from Sir Henry Clinton, dated the 12th of September, announcing his intention in about ten days to attack the forts in the Highlands of the Hudson.

Burgoyne sent back the messenger the same night, and despatched, moreover, two officers in disguise, by different routes, all bearing messages informing Sir Henry of his perilous situation, and urging a diversion that might oblige General Gates to detach a part of his army; adding, that he would endeavor to maintain his present position, and await favorable events until the 12th of October.†

The jealousy of Gates had been intensely excited at finding the whole credit of the late affair given by the army to Arnold: in his despatches to government he made no mention of him.

* Colonel Varick to Schuyler. *Schuyler's Papers*.

† Burgoyne to Lord George Germaine.

This increased the schism between them. Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, who was a sycophantic adherent of Gates, pandered to his pique by withdrawing from Arnold's division Morgan's rifle corps and Dearborn's light infantry, its arms of strength, which had done such brilliant service in the late affair: they were henceforth to be subject to no order, but those from head-quarters.

Arnold called on Gates on the evening of the 22d, to remonstrate. High words passed between them, and matters came to an open rupture. Gates, in his heat, told Arnold that he did not consider him a major-general, he having sent his resignation to Congress; that he had never given him the command of any division of the army; that General Lincoln would arrive in a day or two, and then he would have no further occasion for him, and would give him a pass to go to Philadelphia, whenever he chose.*

Arnold returned to his quarters in a rage, and wrote a note to Gates requesting the proffered permit to depart for Philadelphia; by the time he received it his ire had cooled and he had changed his mind. He determined to remain in camp and abide the anticipated battle.

Lincoln, in the meantime, arrived in advance of his troops; which soon followed to the amount of two thousand. Part of the troops, detached by him under Colonel Brown, were besieging Ticonderoga and Fort Independence. Colonel Brown himself, with part of his detachment, had embarked on Lake George in an armed schooner, and a squadron of captured gunboats and bateaux, and was threatening the enemy's deposit of baggage and heavy artillery at Diamond Island. The toils so skillfully spread were encompassing Burgoyne more and more; the gates of Canada were closing behind him.

A morning or two after Lincoln's arrival, Arnold observed him giving some directions in the left division, and quickly inquired whether he was doing so by order of General Gates; being answered in the negative, he observed that the left division belonged to him; and that he believed his (Lincoln's) proper station was on the right, and that of General Gates ought to be in the center. He requested him to mention this to General Gates, and have the matter adjusted.

"He is determined," writes Varick, "not to suffer any one to interfere in his division, and says it will be death to any officer who does so in action." Arnold, in fact, was in a bellicose vein, and rather blustered about the camp. Gates, he said, could not refuse him his command, and he would not yield it now that a battle was expected.

* Col. Livingston to Schuyler. *Schuyler Papers*.

Some of the general officers and colonels of his division proposed to make him an address, thanking him for his past services, particularly in the late action, and entreating him to stay. Others suggested that the general officers should endeavor to produce a reconciliation between the jarring parties. Lincoln was inclined to do so; but, in the end, neither measure was taken through fear of offending General Gates. In the meantime Arnold remained in camp, treated, he said, as a cipher, and never consulted; though when Congress had sent him to that department, at the request of General Washington, they expected the commander would at least have taken his opinion on public matters.

On the 30th, he gave vent to his feelings in an indignant letter to Gates. "Notwithstanding I have reason to think your treatment proceeds from a spirit of jealousy," writes he, "and that I have everything to fear from the malice of my enemies, conscious of my own innocence and integrity, I am determined to sacrifice my feelings, present peace, and quiet, to the public good, and continue in the army at this critical juncture, when my country needs every support.

"I hope," concludes he, "you will not impute this hint to a wish to command the army, or to outshine you, when I assure you it proceeds from my zeal for the cause of my country, in which I expect to rise or fall."*

All this time the Americans were harassing the British camp with frequent night alarms and attacks on its pickets and outposts.

"From the 20th of September to the 7th of October," writes Burgoyne, "the armies were so near, that not a night passed without firing, and sometimes concerted attacks upon our advanced pickets. I do not believe either officer or soldier ever slept in that interval without his clothes; or that any general officer or commander of a regiment passed a single night, without being upon his legs occasionally at different hours, and constantly an hour before daylight."†

Still Burgoyne kept up a resolute mien, telling his soldiers, in a harangue, that he was determined to leave his bones on the field, or force his way to Albany. He yet clung to the hope, that Sir Henry Clinton might operate in time to relieve him from his perilous position.

We will now cast a look toward New York, and ascertain the cause of Sir Henry's delay in his anxiously expected operations on the Hudson.

* Gates' *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

† *Burgoyne's Expedition*, p. 166.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PREPARATIONS OF SIR HENRY CLINTON.—STATE OF THE HIGHLAND DEFENSES.—PUTNAM ALARMED.—ADVANCE OF THE ARMAMENT UP THE HUDSON.—PLAN OF SIR HENRY CLINTON.—PEEKSKILL THREATENED.—PUTNAM DECEIVED.—SECRET MARCH OF THE ENEMY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS.—FORTS MONTGOMERY AND CLINTON OVERPOWERED.—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE COMMANDERS.—CONFLAGRATION AND EXPLOSION OF THE AMERICAN FRIGATES.—RALLYING EFFORTS OF PUTNAM AND GOVERNOR CLINTON.—THE SPY AND THE SILVER BULLET.—ESOPUS BURNT.—RAVAGING PROGRESS OF THE ENEMY UP THE HUDSON.

THE expedition of Sir Henry Clinton had awaited the arrival of reinforcements from Europe, which were slowly crossing the ocean in Dutch bottoms. At length they arrived, after a three months' voyage, and now there was a stir of warlike preparation at New York; the streets were full of soldiery, the bay full of ships, and water craft of all kinds were plying about the harbor. Between three and four thousand men were to be embarked on board of ships of war, armed galleys, and flat-bottomed boats. A southern destination was given out, but shrewd observers surmised the real one.

The defenses of the Highlands, on which the security of the Hudson depended, were at this time weakly garrisoned; some of the troops having been sent off to reinforce the armies on the Delaware and in the North. Putnam, who had the general command of the Highlands, had but eleven hundred continental and four hundred militia troops with him at Peekskill, his head-quarters. There was a feeble garrison at Fort Independence, in the vicinity of Peekskill, to guard the public stores and workshops at Continental Village.

The Highland forts, Clinton, Montgomery, and Constitution, situated among the mountains and forming their main defense, were no better garrisoned, and George Clinton, who had the command of them, and who was in a manner the champion of the Highlands, was absent from his post, attending the State Legislature at Kingston (Esopus), in Ulster County, in his capacity of governor.

There were patriot eyes in New York to watch the course of events, and patriot boats on the river to act as swift messengers. On the 29th of September, Putnam wrote to his coadjutor the governor: "I have received intelligence on which I can fully depend, that the enemy had received a reinforcement at New York last Thursday, of about three thousand British and foreign troops; that General Clinton has called in guides who belong about Croton River; has ordered hard bread to be baked; that the troops are called from Paulus Hook to King's Bridge, and the whole troops are now under marching orders. I think it highly probable the designs of the enemy are against the posts of the Highlands, or of some parts of the counties of Westchester or Dutchess." Under these circumstances he begged a reinforcement of the militia to enable him to maintain his post, and intimated a wish for the personal assistance and counsel of the governor. In a postscript he adds: "The ships are drawn up in the river, and I believe nothing prevents them from paying us an immediate visit, but a contrary wind."

On receiving this letter the governor forthwith hastened to his post in the Highlands, with such militia force as he could collect. We have heretofore spoken of his Highland citadel, Fort Montgomery, and of the obstructions of chain, boom, and chevaux-de-frise between it and the opposite promontory of Anthony's Nose, with which it had been hoped to barricade the Hudson. The chain had repeatedly given way under the pressure of the tide, but the obstructions were still considered efficient, and were protected by the guns of the fort, and of two frigates and two armed galleys anchored above.

Fort Clinton had subsequently been erected within rifle shot of Fort Montgomery, to occupy ground which commanded it. A deep ravine and stream called Peploeps Kill, intervened between the two forts, across which there was a bridge. The governor had his head-quarters in Fort Montgomery, which was the northern and largest fort, but its works were unfinished. His brother James had charge of Fort Clinton, which was complete. The whole force to garrison the associate forts did not exceed six hundred men, chiefly militia, but they had the veteran Colonel Lamb of the artillery with them, who had served in Canada, and a company of his artillerists was distributed in the two forts.

The armament of Sir Henry Clinton, which had been waiting for a wind, set sail in the course of a day or two and stood up the Hudson, dogged by American swift-rowing whale-boats. Late at night on the 4th of October came a barge across the

river, from Peekskill to Fort Montgomery, bearing a letter from Putnam to the governor. "This morning," writes he, "we had information from our guard boats, that there were two ships of war, three tenders, and a large number of flat-bottomed boats, coming up the river. They proceeded up as far as Tarrytown, where they landed their men. This evening they were followed by one large man-of-war, five topsail vessels, and a large number of small craft. I have sent off parties to examine their route and harass their march, if prudent. By information from several different quarters, we have reason to believe they intend for this post. They are now making up, as we hear, for the Croton Bridge."*

The landing of the troops at Tarrytown was a mere feint on the part of Sir Henry to distract the attention of the Americans; after marching a few miles into the country, they returned and reëmbarked; the armament continued across the Tappan Sea and Haverstraw Bay to Verplanck's Point, where, on the 15th, Sir Henry landed with three thousand men about eight miles below Peekskill.

Putnam drew back to the hills in the rear of the village, to prepare for the expected attack, and sent off to Governor Clinton for all the troops he could spare. So far the manœuvres of Sir Henry Clinton had been successful. It was his plan to threaten an attack on Peekskill and Fort Independence, and, when he had drawn the attention of the American commanders to that quarter, to land troops on the western shore of the Hudson, below the Dunderberg (Thunder Hill), make a rapid march through the defiles behind that mountain to the rear of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, come down on them by surprise, and carry them by a *coup de main*.

Accordingly at an early hour of the following morning, taking advantage of a thick fog, he crossed with two thousand men to Stony Point, on the west shore of the river, leaving about a thousand men, chiefly royalists, at Verplanck's Point, to keep up a threatening aspect towards Peekskill. Three frigates, also, were to stand up what is called the Devil's Horse Race into Peekskill Bay, and station themselves within cannon-shot of Fort Independence.

The crossing of the troops had been dimly descried from Peekskill, but they were supposed to be a mere detachment from the main body on a maraud.

Having accomplished his landing, Sir Henry, conducted by a tory guide, set out on a forced and circuitous march of several miles by rugged defiles, round the western base of the Dunder-

* *Correspondence of the Revolution.* Sparks, ii. 537.

berg. At the entrance of the pass he left a small force to guard it, and keep up his communication with the ships. By eight o'clock in the morning he had effected his march round the Dunderberg, and halted on the northern side in a ravine, between it and a conical mount called Bear Hill. The possibility of an enemy's approach by this pass had been noticed by Washington in reconnoitering the Highlands, and he had mentioned it in his instructions to Generals Greene and Knox, when they were sent to make their military survey, but they considered it impracticable, from the extreme difficulty of the mountain passes. It is in defiance of difficulties, however, that surprises are apt to be attempted, and the most signal have been achieved in the face of seeming impossibilities.

In the ravine between the Dunderberg and Bear Hill, Sir Henry divided his forces. One division, nine hundred strong, led by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, was to make a circuit through the forest round the western side of Bear Hill, so as to gain the rear of Fort Montgomery. After Sir Henry had allowed sufficient time for them to make the circuit, he was to proceed with the other division down the ravine, towards the river, turn to the left along a narrow strip of land between the Hudson and a small lake called Sinipink Pond, which lay at the foot of Bear Hill, and advance upon Fort Clinton. Both forts were to be attacked at the same time.

The detachment under Campbell set off in high spirits; it was composed partly of royalists, led by Colonel Beverly Robinson of New York, partly of Emerick's chasseurs, and partly of grenadiers, under Lord Rawdon, then about twenty-four years of age, who had already seen service at Bunker's Hill. With him went Count Gabrouski, a Polish nobleman, aide-de-camp to Sir Henry Clinton, but who had sought to accompany his friend, Lord Rawdon, in this wild mountain scramble. Everything thus far had been conducted with celerity and apparent secrecy, and complete surprise of both forts was anticipated. Sir Henry had indeed outwitted one of the guardians of the Highlands, but the other was aware of his designs. Governor Clinton, on receiving intelligence of ships of war coming up the Hudson, had sent scouts beyond the Dunderberg to watch their movements. Early on the present morning, word had been brought him that forty boats were landing a large force at Stony Point. He now, in his turn, apprehended an attack, and sent to Putnam for reinforcements, preparing in the meantime, to make such defense as his scanty means afforded.

A lieutenant was sent out with thirty men from Fort Clinton, to proceed along the river-road and reconnoiter. He fell in

with the advance guard of Sir Henry Clinton's division, and retreated skirmishing to the fort. A larger detachment was sent out to check the approach of the enemy on this side; while sixty men, afterwards increased to a hundred, took post with a brass field-piece in the Bear Hill defile.

It was a narrow and rugged pass, bordered by shagged forests. As Campbell and his division came pressing forward, they were checked by the discharge of fire-arms and of the brass field-piece, which swept the steep defile. The British troops then filed off on each side into the woods, to surround the Americans. The latter finding it impossible to extricate their field-piece in the rugged pass, spiked it, and retreated into the fort, under cover of the fire of a twelve-pounder, with which Lamb had posted himself on the crest of a hill.

Sir Henry Clinton had met with equally obstinate opposition in his approach to Fort Clinton; the narrow strip of land between Lake Sinipink and the Hudson, along which he advanced, being fortified by an abatis. By four o'clock the Americans were driven within their works, and both forts were assailed. The defense was desperate: for Governor Clinton was a hard fighter, and he was still in hopes of reinforcements from Putnam; not knowing that the messenger he sent to him had turned traitor and deserted to the enemy.

About five o'clock, he was summoned to surrender in five minutes, to prevent the effusion of blood: the reply was a refusal. About ten minutes afterwards, there was a general attack upon both forts. It was resisted with obstinate spirit. The action continued until dusk. The ships under Commodore Hotham approached near enough to open an irregular fire upon the forts, and upon the vessels anchored above the chevaux-de-frise. The latter returned the fire; and the flash and roar of their cannonry in the gathering darkness and among the echoes of the mountains increased the terrors of the strife. The works, however, were too extensive to be manned by the scanty garrisons; they were entered by different places and carried at the point of the bayonet; the Americans fought desperately from one redoubt to another; some were slain, some taken prisoners, and some escaped under cover of the night to the river or the mountains. "The garrison," writes Clinton, significantly, "had to fight their way out as many as could, as we determined not to surrender."

His brother James was saved from a deadly thrust of a bayonet, by a garrison orderly-book in his pocket; but he received a flesh-wound in the thigh. He slid down a precipice, one hundred feet high, into the ravine between the forts, and

escaped to the woods. The governor leaped down the rocks to the river side, where a boat was putting off with a number of the fugitives. They turned back to receive him, but he generously refused to endanger their safety, as the boat was already loaded to the gunwale. It was only on receiving assurance of its being capable of bearing his additional weight, that he consented to enter. The boat crossed the Hudson in safety, and before midnight the governor was with Putnam, at Continental Village, concerting further measures.

Putnam had been completely outmanœuvered by Sir Henry Clinton. He had continued until late in the morning, in the belief that Peekskill and Fort Independence were to be the objects of attack. His pickets and scouts could not ascertain the number of the enemy remaining on the east side of the river; a large fire near Stony Point made him think the troops which had crossed were merely burning storehouses; while ships, galleys, and flat-bottomed boats seemed preparing to land forces at Fort Independence and Peekskill. In the course of the morning he sallied forth with Brigadier-general Parsons, to reconnoiter the ground near the enemy. After their return they were alarmed, he says, by "a very heavy and hot firing both of small arms and cannon, at Fort Montgomery," which must have made a tremendous uproar among the echoes of the Dunderberg. Aware of the real point of danger, he immediately detached five hundred men to reinforce the garrison. They had six miles to march along the eastern shore, and then to cross the river; before they could do so the fate of the forts was decided.

British historians acknowledged that the valor and resolution displayed by the Americans in the defense of these forts were in no instance exceeded during the war; their loss in killed, wounded and missing, was stated at two hundred and fifty, a large proportion of the number engaged. Their gallant defense awakened no generous sentiment in the victors. "As the soldiers," observes the British writer, "were much irritated, as well by the fatigue they had undergone and the opposition they met, as by the loss of some brave and favorite officers, the slaughter of the enemy was considerable." *

Among the officers thus deplored, and bloodily revenged, was Colonel Campbell, who commanded the detachment. At his fall the command devolved on Colonel Beverly Robinson of the American loyalists. Another officer slain was Major Grant of the New York volunteers. Count Gabroutski, the Polish aide-de-camp of Sir Henry Clinton, had gallantly signalized himself

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i. p. 311.

by the side of his friend, Lord Rawdon, who led the grenadiers in storming Fort Montgomery. The count received his death wound at the foot of the ramparts. Giving his sword to a grenadier, "Take this sword to Lord Rawdon," said he, "and tell him the owner died like a soldier." †

On the capture of the forts, the American frigates and galleys stationed for the protection of the chevaux-de-frise slipped their cables, made all sail, and endeavored to escape up the river. The wind, however, proved adverse; there was danger of their falling into the hands of the enemy; the crews, therefore, set them on fire and abandoned them. As every sail was set, the vessels, we are told, were soon "magnificent pyramids of fire;" the surrounding mountains were lit up by the glare, and a train of ruddy light gleamed along the river. They were in a part of the Highlands famous for its echoes; as the flames gradually reached the loaded cannon, their thundering reports were multiplied and prolonged along the rocky shores. The vessels at length blew up with tremendous explosions, and all again was darkness."*

On the following morning, the chevaux-de-frise and other obstructions between Fort Montgomery and Anthony's Nose were cleared away: the Americans evacuated Forts Independence and Constitution, and a free passage up the Hudson was open for the British ships. Sir Henry Clinton proceeded no further in person, but left the rest of the enterprise to be accomplished by Sir James Wallace and General Vaughan, with a flying squadron of light frigates, and a considerable detachment of troops.

Putnam had retreated to a pass in the mountains, on the east side of the river, near Fishkill, having removed as much of the stores and baggage as possible from the post he had abandoned. The old general was somewhat mortified at having been outwitted by the enemy, but endeavored to shift the responsibility. In a letter to Washington (October 8th), he writes: "I have repeatedly informed your Excellency of the enemy's design against this post; but, from some motive or other you always differed from me in opinion. As this conjecture of mine has for once proved right, I cannot omit informing you, that my real and sincere opinion is, that they now mean to join General Burgoyne with the utmost despatch. Governor Clinton is exerting himself in collecting the militia of this State. Brigadier-general Parsons I have sent off to forward in the Connecticut militia, which are now arriving in great numbers. I therefore

* Steadman, vol i. p. 364."

† Steadman, vol. i. p. 364.

hope and trust, that in the course of a few days I shall be able to oppose the progress of the enemy."

He had concerted with Governor Clinton that they should move to the northward with their forces, along the opposite shores of the Hudson, endeavoring to keep pace with the enemy's ships and cover the country from their attacks.

The governor was in the neighborhood of New Windsor, just above the Highlands, where he had posted himself to rally what he termed his "broken but brave troops," and to call out the militia of Ulster and Orange. "I am persuaded," writes he, "if the militia will join me, we can save the country from destruction, and defeat the enemy's design of assisting their Northern army." The militia, however, were not as prompt as usual in answering to the call of their popular and brave-hearted governor. "They are well disposed," writes he, "but anxious about the immediate safety of their respective families (who, for many miles, are yet moving further from the river); they come in the morning and return in the evening, and I never know when I have them, or what my strength is."*

On the 9th, two persons coming from Fort Montgomery were arrested by his guards, and brought before him for examination. One was much agitated, and was observed to put something hastily into his mouth and swallow it. An emetic was administered, and brought up a small silver bullet. Before he could be prevented he swallowed it again. On his refusing a second emetic, the governor threatened to have him hanged and his body opened. The threat produced the bullet in the preceding manner. It was oval in form and hollow, with a screw in the centre, and contained a note from Sir Henry Clinton to Burgoyne, written on a slip of thin paper, and dated (October 8th) from Fort Montgomery. "*Nous y voici* [here we are], and nothing between us and Gates. I sincerely hope this little success of ours will facilitate your operations."†

The bearer of the letter was tried and convicted as a spy, and sentenced to be hanged.

The enemy's light-armed vessels were now making their way up the river; landing marauding parties occasionally to make depredations.

As soon as the governor could collect a little force, he pressed forward to protect Kingston (Esopus), the seat of the State legislature. The enemy in the meantime landed from their

* Letter to the Council of Safety. *Journal of Provincial Congress*, vol. i. 1064.

† Governor Clinton to the N. Y. Council of Safety. *Journal of Provincial Congress*.

ships, routed about one hundred and fifty militia collected to oppose them, marched to the village, set fire to it in every part, consuming great quantities of stores collected there, and then retreated to their ships.

Governor Clinton was two hours too late. He beheld the flames from a distance; and having brought with him the spy, the bearer of the silver bullet, he hanged him on an apple-tree in sight of the burning village.

Having laid Kingston, the seat of the State government, in ashes, the enemy proceeded in their ravages, destroying the residences of conspicuous patriots at Rhinebeck, Livingston Manor, and elsewhere, and among others the mansion of the widow of the brave General Montgomery: trusting to close their desolating career by a triumphant junction with Burgoyne at Albany.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SCARCITY IN THE BRITISH CAMP.—GATES BIDES HIS TIME.—FORAGING MOVEMENT OF BURGOYNE.—BATTLE OF THE 7TH OCTOBER.—ROUT OF THE BRITISH AND HESSIANS.—SITUATION OF THE BARONESS RIEDESEL AND LADY HARRIET ACKLAND DURING THE BATTLE.—DEATH OF GEN. FRASER.—HIS FUNERAL.—NIGHT RETREAT OF THE BRITISH.—EXPEDITION OF LADY HARRIET ACKLAND.—DESPERATE SITUATION OF BURGOYNE AT SARATOGA.—CAPITULATION.—SURRENDER.—CONDUCT OF THE AMERICAN TROOPS.—SCENES IN THE CAMP.—GALLANT COURTESY OF SCHUYLER TO THE BARONESS RIEDESEL.—HIS MAGNANIMOUS CONDUCT TOWARD BURGOYNE.—RETURN OF THE BRITISH DOWN THE HUDSON.

WHILE Sir Henry Clinton had been thundering in the Highlands, Burgoyne and his army had been wearing out hope within their intrenchments, vigilantly watched, but unassailed by the Americans. They became impatient even of this impunity. "The enemy, though he can bring four times more soldiers against us, shows no desire to make an attack," writes a Hessian officer.*

Arnold, too, was chafing in the camp, and longing for a chance, as usual, "to right himself" by his sword. In a letter to Gates he tries to goad him on. "I think it my duty (which nothing shall deter me from doing) to acquaint you, the army

* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*.

are clamorous for action. The militia (who compose great part of the army) are already threatening to go home. One fortnight's inaction will, I make no doubt, lessen your army by sickness and desertion, at least four thousand men. In which time the enemy may be reinforced, and make good their retreat.

"I have reason to think, from intelligence since received, that, had we improved the 20th of September, it might have ruined the enemy. That is past; let me entreat you to improve the present time."

Gates was not to be goaded into action; he saw the desperate situation of Burgoyne, and bided his time. "Perhaps," writes he, "despair may dictate to him to risk all upon one throw; he is an old gamester, and in his time has seen all chances. I will endeavor to be ready to prevent his good fortune, and, if possible, secure my own."*

On the 7th of October, but four or five days remained of the time Burgoyne had pledged himself to await the coöperation of Sir Henry Clinton. He now determined to make a grand movement on the left of the American camp, to discover whether he could force a passage, should it be necessary to advance, or dislodge it from its position, should he have to retreat. Another object was to cover a forage of the army, which was suffering from the great scarcity.

For this purpose fifteen hundred of his best troops, with two twelve-pounders, two howitzers and six six-pounders, were to be led by himself, seconded by Major-generals Phillips and Riedesel, and Brigadier-general Fraser. "No equal number of men," say the British accounts, "were ever better commanded; and it would have been difficult indeed, to have matched the men with an equal number."†

On leaving his camp, Burgoyne committed the guard of it on the high grounds to Brigadier-generals Hamilton and Specht, and of the redoubts on the low grounds near the river, to Brigadier-general Gall.

Forming his troops within three-quarters of a mile of the left of the Americans, though covered from their sight by the forest, he sent out a corps of rangers, provincials, and Indians, to skulk through the woods, get in their rear, and give them an alarm at the time the attack took place in front.

The movement, though carried on behind the screen of forests, was discovered. In the afternoon the advanced guard of the American centre beat to arms; the alarm was repeated

* Letter to Gov. Clinton. Gates' *Papers*.

† *Civil War in America*, i. 302.

throughout the line. Gates ordered his officers to their alarm posts, and sent forth Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, to inquire the cause. From a rising ground in an open place he descried the enemy in force, their foragers busy in a field of wheat, the officers reconnoitering the left wing of the camp with telescopes from the top of a cabin.

Returning to the camp, Wilkinson reported the position and movements of the enemy; that their front was open, their flanks rested on woods, under cover of which they might be attacked, and their right was skirted by a height: that they were reconnoitering the left, and he thought offered battle.

"Well, then," replied Gates, "order out Morgan to begin the game."

A plan of attack was soon arranged. Morgan with his riflemen and a body of infantry was sent to make a circuit through the woods, and get possession of the heights on the right of the enemy, while General Poor with his brigade of New York and New Hampshire troops, and a part of Learned's brigade, were to advance against the enemy's left. Morgan was to make an attack on the heights as soon as he should hear the fire opened below.

Burgoyne now drew out his troops in battle array. The grenadiers, under Major Ackland, with the artillery, under Major Williams, formed the left, and were stationed on a rising ground, with a rivulet called Mill Creek in front. Next to them were the Hessians, under Riedesel, and British, under Phillips, forming the centre. The light infantry, under Lord Balcarras, formed the extreme right; having in the advance a detachment of five hundred picked men, under General Fraser, ready to flank the Americans as soon as they should be attacked in front.

He had scarce made these arrangements, when he was astonished and confounded by a thundering of artillery on his left, and a rattling fire of rifles on the woody heights on his right. The troops under Poor advanced steadily up the ascent where Ackland's grenadiers and Williams' artillery were stationed; received their fire, and then rushed forward. Ackland's grenadiers received the first brunt, but it extended along the line, as detachment after detachment arrived, and was carried on with inconceivable fury. The Hessian artillerists spoke afterwards of the heedlessness with which the Americans rushed upon the cannon, while they were discharging grapeshot. The artillery was repeatedly taken and retaken, and at length remained in possession of the Americans, who turned it upon its former owners. Major Ackland was wounded in both legs, and taken prisoner. Major Williams of the artillery was also cap-

tured. The headlong impetuosity of the attack confounded the regular tacticians. Much of this has been ascribed to the presence and example of Arnold. That daring officer, who had lingered in the camp in expectation of a fight, was exasperated at having no command assigned him. On hearing the din of battle, he could restrain no longer his warlike impulse, but threw himself on his horse and sallied forth. Gates saw him issuing from the camp. "He'll do some rash thing!" cried he, and sent his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, to call him back. Arnold surmised his errand and evaded it. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed into the scene of action, and was received with acclamation. Being the superior officer in the field his orders were obeyed of course. Putting himself at the head of the troops of Learned's brigade, he attacked the Hessians in the enemy's centre, and broke them with repeated charges. Indeed, for a time his actions seemed to partake of frenzy; riding hither and thither, brandishing his sword, and cheering on the men to acts of desperation. In one of his paroxysms of excitement, he struck and wounded an American officer on the head with his sword, without, as he afterwards declared, being conscious of the act. Wilkinson asserts that he was partly intoxicated; but Arnold needed only his own irritated pride and the smell of gunpowder to rouse him to acts of madness.

Morgan, in the meantime, was harassing the enemy's right wing with an incessant fire of small-arms, and preventing it from sending any assistance to the centre. General Fraser with his chosen corps, for some time rendered great protection to this wing. Mounted on an iron-gray charger, his uniform of a field-officer made him a conspicuous object for Morgan's sharpshooters. One bullet cut the crupper of his horse, another grazed his mane. "You are singled out, general," said his aide-de-camp, "and had better shift your ground." "My duty forbids me to fly from danger," was the reply. A moment afterwards he was shot down by a marksman posted in a tree. Two grenadiers bore him to the camp. His fall was a death-blow to his corps. The arrival on the field of a large reinforcement of New York troops under General Ten Broeck, completed the confusion. Burgoyne saw that the field was lost, and now only thought of saving his camp. The troops nearest to the lines were ordered to throw themselves within them, while Generals Phillips and Riedesel covered the retreat of the main body, which was in danger of being cut off. The artillery was abandoned, all the horses, and most of the men who had so bravely defended it, having been killed. The troops, though hard pressed, retired in good order. Scarcely had they entered the

camp when it was stormed with great fury; the Americans, with Arnold at their head rushing to the lines under a severe discharge of grape-shot and small-arms. Lord Balcarras defended the intrenchments bravely; the action was fierce, and well sustained on either side. After an ineffectual attempt to make his way into the camp in this quarter at the point of the bayonet, Arnold spurred his horse toward the right flank of the camp occupied by the German reserve, where Lieutenant-colonel Brooks was making a general attack with a Massachusetts regiment. Here, with a part of a platoon, he forced his way into a sally-port, but a shot from the retreating Hessians killed his horse, and wounded him in the same leg which had received a wound before Quebec. He was borne off from the field, but not until the victory was complete; for the Germans retreated from the works, leaving on the field their brave defender, Lieutenant-colonel Breyman, mortally wounded.

The night was now closing in. The victory of the Americans was decisive. They had routed the enemy, killed and wounded a great number, made many prisoners, taken their field-artillery, and gained possession of a part of their works which laid open the right and the rear of their camp. They lay all night on their arms, within half a mile of the scene of action, prepared to renew the assault upon the camp in the morning. Affecting scenes had occurred in the enemy's camp during this deadly conflict.

In the morning previous to the battle, the Baroness De Riedesel had breakfasted with her husband in the camp. Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, and Fraser were to dine with her husband and herself, in a house in the neighborhood where she and her children were quartered. She observed much movement in the camp, but was quieted by the assurance that it was to be a mere reconnoissance. On her way home she met a number of Indians, painted and decorated and armed with guns, and shouting War! War! Her fears were awakened, and scarce had she reached home when she heard the rattling of fire-arms and the thundering of artillery. The din increased, and soon became so terrible that she "was more dead than alive." About one o'clock came one of the generals who were to have dined with her—poor General Fraser—brought upon a handbarrow, mortally wounded. "The table," writes she, "which was already prepared for dinner, was immediately removed, and a bed placed in its stead for the general. I sat terrified and trembling in a corner. The noise grew more alarming, and I was in a continual agony and tremor, while thinking that my husband might soon, also, be brought in, wounded

like General Fraser. That poor general said to the surgeon, 'Tell me the truth, is there no hope?'—There was none. Prayers were read, after which he desired that General Burgoyne should be requested to have him buried on the next day at six o'clock in the evening, on a hill where a breastwork had been constructed."

Lady Harriet Ackland was in a tent near by. News came to her that her husband was mortally wounded and taken prisoner. She was in an agony of distress. The Baroness endeavored to persuade her that his wound might not be dangerous, and advised her to ask permission to join him. She divided the night between soothing attentions to Lady Harriet, and watchful care of her children who were asleep, but who she feared might disturb the poor dying general. Towards morning, thinking his agony approaching, she wrapped them in blankets and retired with them into the entrance hall. Courteous even in death, the general sent her several messages to beg her pardon for the trouble he thought he was giving her. At eight o'clock in the morning he expired.*

Burgoyne had shifted his position during the night, to heights about a mile to the north, close to the river, and covered in front by a ravine. Early in the morning, the Americans took possession of the camp which he had abandoned. A random fire of artillery and small-arms was kept up on both sides during the day. The British sharpshooters stationed in the ravine did some execution, and General Lincoln was wounded in the leg while reconnoitering. Gates, however, did not think it advisable to force a desperate enemy when in a strong position, at the expense of a prodigal waste of blood. He took all measures to cut off his retreat and insure a surrender. General Fellows, with 1,400 men, had already been sent to occupy the high ground east of the Hudson opposite Saratoga Ford. Other detachments were sent higher up the river in the direction of Lake George.

Burgoyne saw that nothing was left for him but a prompt and rapid retreat to Saratoga, yet in this he was delayed by a melancholy duty of friendship; it was to attend the obsequies of the gallant Fraser, who, according to his dying request, was to be interred at six o'clock in the evening, within a redoubt which had been constructed on a hill.

Between sunset and dark, his body was borne to the appointed place by grenadiers of his division, followed by the generals and their staffs. The Americans seeing indistinctly what, in the twilight, appeared to be a movement of troops up

* *Riedesel's Memoirs.*

the hill and in the redoubt, pointed their artillery in that direction. "Cannon balls flew around and above the assembled mourners," writes the Baroness Riedesel, who was a spectator from a distance. "Many cannon balls flew close by me, but my whole attention was engaged by the funeral scene, where I saw my husband exposed to imminent danger. This, indeed, was not a moment to be apprehensive for my own safety. General Gates protested afterwards, that had he known what was going on, he would have stopped the firing immediately."

We have the scene still more feelingly described by Burgoyne.

"The incessant cannonade during the ceremony; the steady attitude and unaltered voice with which the chaplain officiated though frequently covered with dust which the shot threw up on all sides of him; the mute but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance; these objects will remain to the last of life upon the mind of every man who was present. The growing darkness added to the scenery, and the whole marked a character of that juncture which would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited. To the canvass and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend! I consign thy memory. There may thy talents, thy manly virtues, their progress and their period, find due distinction: and long may they survive, long after the frail record of my pen shall be forgotten!" *

General Fraser was well worthy of this eulogium. He was the most popular officer of the army, and one of the most efficient. He was one in whom Burgoyne reposed the most implicit confidence, and deeply must it have added to his gloom of mind at this dark hour of his fortunes, to have this his friend and counselor and brother in arms shot down at his side.

"The reflections arising from these scenes," writes he, "gave place to the perplexities of the night. A defeated army was to retreat from an enemy flushed with success, much superior in front, and occupying strong posts in the country behind. We were equally liable upon that march to be attacked in the front, flank, or rear."

Preparations had been made to decamp immediately after the funeral, and at nine o'clock at night the retreat commenced. Large fires had been lighted, and many tents were left standing to conceal the movement. The hospital in which were about three hundred sick and wounded, was abandoned as were likewise several bateaux, laden with baggage and provisions.

* Riedesel's *Memoirs*, p. 171.

It was a dismal retreat. The rain fell in torrents ; the roads were deep and broken, and the horses weak and half-starved from want of forage. At daybreak there was a halt to refresh the troops, and give time for the bateaux laden with provisions to come abreast. In three hours the march was resumed, but before long there was another halt, to guard against an American reconnoitering party which appeared in sight. When the troops were again about to march, General Burgoyne received a message from Lady Harriet Ackland, expressing a wish to pass to the American camp and ask permission from General Gates to join her husband. "Though I was ready to believe," writes Burgoyne, "(for I had experience), that patience and fortitude in a supreme degree, were to be found, as well as every other virtue, under the most tender forms, I was astonished at this proposal. After so long an agitation of spirits, exhausted not only for want of rest, but absolutely want of food, drenched in rain for twelve hours together, that a woman should be capable of such an undertaking as delivering herself to the enemy, probably in the night, and uncertain of what hands she might first fall into, appeared an effort above human nature. The assistance I was enabled to give her was small indeed ; I had not even a cup of wine to offer her ; but I was told she had found from some kind and fortunate hand, a little rum and dirty water. All I could furnish her was an open boat, and a few lines written upon dirty wet paper, to General Gates recommending her to his protection.

"Mr. Brudenel, the chaplain of the artillery (the same gentleman who had officiated so signally at General Fraser's funeral), readily undertook to accompany her, and with one female servant, and the major's valet-de-chambre (who had a ball which he had received in the late action then in his shoulder) she rowed down the river to meet the enemy."

The night was far advanced before the boat reached the American outposts. It was challenged by a sentinel who threatened to fire into it should it attempt to pass. Mr. Brudenel made known that it was a flag of truce, and stated who was the personage it brought ; report was made to the adjutant-general. Treachery was apprehended, and word was returned to detain the flag until daylight. Lady Harriet and her companions were allowed to land. Major Dearborn, the officer on guard, surrendered his chamber in the guard-house to her ladyship ; bedding was brought, a fire was made, tea was served, and her mind being relieved by assurances of her husband's safety, she was enabled to pass a night of comparative comfort and tran-

quillity.* She proceeded to the American camp in the morning, when, Burgoyne acknowledges, "she was received and accommodated by General Gates, with all the humanity and respect that her rank, her merits, and her fortune deserved."

To resume the fortunes of the retreating army. It rained terribly through the residue of the 9th, and in consequence of repeated halts, they did not reach Saratoga until evening. A detachment of Americans had arrived there before them, and were throwing up intrenchments on a commanding height at Fish Kill. They abandoned their work, forded the Hudson, and joined a force under General Fellows, posted on the hills east of the river. The bridge over the Fish Kill had been destroyed; the artillery could not cross until the ford was examined. Exhausted by fatigue, the men for the most part had not strength nor inclination to cut wood nor make fire, but threw themselves upon the wet ground in their wet clothes, and slept under the continuing rain. "I was quite wet," writes the Baroness Riedesel, "and was obliged to remain in that condition for want of a place to change my apparel. I seated myself near a fire and undressed the children, and we then laid ourselves upon some straw."

At daylight on the 10th, the artillery and the last of the troops passed the fords of the Fish Kill, and took a position upon the heights, and in the redoubts formerly constructed there. To protect the troops from being attacked in passing the ford by the Americans who were approaching, Burgoyne ordered fire to be set to the farm-houses and other buildings on the south side of the Fish Kill. Amongst the rest, the noble mansion of General Schuyler, with storehouses, granaries, mills, and the other appurtenances of a great rural establishment, was entirely consumed. Burgoyne himself estimated the value of property destroyed at ten thousand pounds sterling. The measure was condemned by friend as well as foe, but he justified it on the principles of self-preservation.

The force under General Fellows, posted on the opposite hills of the Hudson, now opened a fire from a battery commanding the ford of that river. Thus prevented from crossing, Burgoyne thought to retreat along the west side as far as Fort George, on the way to Canada, and sent out workmen under a strong escort to repair the bridges, and open the road toward Fort Edward. The escort was soon recalled and the work abandoned; for the Americans under Gates appeared in great force, on the heights south of the Fish Kill, and seemed preparing to cross and bring on an engagement.

* The statement here given is founded on the report made to General Wilkinson by Major (afterwards General) Dearborn. It varies from that of Burgoyne.

The opposite shores of the Hudson were now lined with detachments of Americans. Bateaux laden with provisions, which had attended the movements of the army, were fired upon, many taken, some retaken with loss of life. It was necessary to land the provisions from such as remained, and bring them up the hill into the camp, which was done under a heavy fire from the American artillery.

Burgoyne called now a general council of war, in which it was resolved, since the bridges could not be repaired, to abandon the artillery and baggage, let the troops carry a supply of provisions upon their backs, push forward in the night, and force their way across the fords at or near Fort Edward.

Before the plan could be put in execution, scouts brought word that the Americans were intrenched opposite those fords, and encamped in force with cannon, on the high ground between Fort Edward and Fort George. In fact, by this time the American army, augmented by militia and volunteers from all quarters, had posted itself in strong positions on both sides of the Hudson, so as to extend three-fourths of a circle round the enemy.

Giving up all further attempt at retreat, Burgoyne now fortified his camp on the heights to the north of Fish Kill, still hoping that succor might arrive from Sir Henry Clinton, or that an attack upon his trenches might give him some chance of cutting his way through.

In this situation his troops lay continually on their arms. His camp was subjected to cannonading from Fellows' batteries on the opposite side of the Hudson, Gates' batteries on the south of Fish Kill, and a galling fire from Morgan's riflemen, stationed on heights in the rear.

The Baroness De Riedesel and her helpless little ones were exposed to the dangers and horrors of this long turmoil. On the morning when the attack was opened, General De Riedesel sent them to take refuge in a house in the vicinity. On their way thither the baroness saw several men on the opposite bank of the Hudson, leveling their muskets and about to fire. Throwing her children in the back part of the carriage the anxious mother endeavored to cover them with her body. The men fired; a poor wounded soldier, who had sought shelter behind the carriage, received a shot which broke his arm. The baroness succeeded in getting to the house. Some women and crippled soldiers had already taken refuge there. It was mistaken for head-quarters and cannonaded. The baroness retreated into the cellar, laid herself in a corner near the door with her children's heads upon her knees, and passed a sleepless night of mental anguish.

In the morning the cannonade began anew. Cannon balls passed through the house repeatedly with a tremendous noise. A poor soldier, who was about to have a leg amputated, lost the other by one of these balls. The day was passed among such horrors. The wives of a major, a lieutenant, and a commissary, were her companions in misery. "They sat together," she says, "deploring their situation, when some one entered to announce bad news." There was whispering among her companions, with deep looks of sorrow. "I immediately suspected," says she, "that my husband had been killed. I shrieked aloud." She was soothed by assurances that nothing had happened to him; and was given to understand by a sidelong glance, that the wife of the lieutenant was the unfortunate one; her husband had been killed.

For six days, she and her children remained in this dismal place of refuge. The cellar was spacious, with three compartments, but the number of occupants increased. The wounded were brought in to be relieved—or to die. She remained with her children near the door, to escape more easily in case of fire. She put straw under mattresses; on these she lay with her little ones, and her female servants slept near her.

Her frequent dread was, that the army might be driven off or march away, and she be left behind. "I crept up the staircase," says she, "more than once, and when I saw our soldiers near their watchfires, I became more calm, and could even have slept."

There was great distress for water. The river was near, but the Americans shot every one who approached it. A soldier's wife at length summoned resolution, and brought a supply. "The Americans," adds the baroness, "told us afterwards, that they spared her *on account of her sex*."

"I endeavored," continues she, "to dispel my melancholy, by constantly attending to the wounded. I made them tea and coffee, for which I received their warmest acknowledgments. I often shared my dinner with them."

Her husband visited her once or twice daily, at the risk of his life. On one occasion, General Phillips accompanied him, but was overcome when he saw the sufferings and danger by which this noble woman and her children were surrounded, and of which we have given a very subdued picture. "I would not for ten thousand guineas see this place again," exclaimed the general. "I am heart-broken with what I have seen."

Burgoyne was now reduced to despair. His forces were diminished by losses, by the desertion of Canadians and royalists, and the total defection of the Indians; and on inspection

it was found that the provisions on hand, even upon short allowance, would not suffice for more than three days. A council of war, therefore, was called of all the generals, field-officers, and captains commanding troops. The deliberations were brief. All concurred in the necessity of opening a treaty with General Gates, for a surrender on honorable terms. While they were yet deliberating, an eighteen-pound ball passed through the tent, sweeping across the table round which they were seated.

Negotiations were accordingly opened on the 13th, under sanction of a flag. Lieutenant Kingston, Burgoyne's adjutant-general, was the bearer of a note, proposing a cessation of hostilities until terms could be adjusted.

The first terms offered by Gates were that the enemy should lay down their arms within their intrenchments and surrender themselves prisoners of war. These were indignantly rejected, with an intimation that, if persisted in, hostilities must recommence.

Counter-proposals were then made by General Burgoyne, and finally accepted by General Gates. According to these, the British troops were to march out of the camp with artillery and all the honors of war, to a fixed place, where they were to pile their arms at a word of command from their own officers. They were to be allowed a free passage to Europe upon condition of not serving again in America, during the present war. The army was not to be separated, especially the men from the officers; roll-calling and other regular duties were to be permitted; the officers were to be on parole, and to wear their side-arms. All private property to be sacred; no baggage to be searched or molested. All persons appertaining to or following the camp, whatever might be their country, were to be comprehended in these terms of capitulation.

Schuyler's late secretary, Colonel Varick, who was still in camp, writes to him on the 19th: "Burgoyne says he will send all his general officers, at ten, in the morning, to finish and settle the business. This, I trust, will be accomplished before twelve, and then I shall have the honor and happiness of congratulating you on the glorious success of our arms. I wish to God I could say under your command.

"If you wish to see Burgoyne, you will be necessitated to see him here." *

In the night of the 16th, before the articles of capitulation had been signed, a British officer from the army below made his way into the camp, with despatches from Sir Henry Clinton, announcing that he had captured the forts in the Highlands,

* Schuyler's *Papers*.

and had pushed detachments further up the Hudson. Burgoyne now submitted to the consideration of his officers, "whether it was consistent with public faith, and if so, expedient, to suspend the execution of the treaty and trust to events." His own opinion inclined in the affirmative, but the majority of the council determined that the public faith was fully plighted. The capitulation was accordingly signed by Burgoyne on the 17th of October.

The British army, at the time of the surrender, was reduced by capture, death, and desertion, from nine thousand to five thousand seven hundred and fifty-two men. That of Gates, regulars and militia, amounted to ten thousand five hundred and fifty-four men on duty; between two and three thousand being on the sick list, or absent on furlough.

By this capitulation, the Americans gained a fine train of artillery, seven thousand stand of arms, and a great quantity of clothing, tents, and military stores of all kinds.

When the British troops marched forth to deposit their arms at the appointed place, Colonel Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, was the only American soldier to be seen. Gates had ordered his troops to keep rigidly within their lines, that they might not add by their presence to the humiliation of a brave enemy. In fact, throughout all his conduct, during the campaign, British writers, and Burgoyne himself, give him credit for acting with great humanity and forbearance.*

Wilkinson, in his memoirs, describes the first meeting of Gates and Burgoyne, which took place at the head of the American camp. They were attended by their staffs and by other general officers. Burgoyne was in a rich royal uniform. Gates in a plain blue frock. When they had approached nearly within sword's length they reined up and halted. Burgoyne, raising his hat most gracefully, said; "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner;" to which the other, returning his salute, replied, "I shall always be ready to testify that it has not been through any fault of your Excellency."

"We passed through the American camp," writes the already cited Hessian officer, "in which all the regiments were drawn out beside the artillery, and stood under arms. Not one of them was uniformly clad; each had on the clothes which he wore in the fields, the church, or the tavern. They stood, however, like soldiers, well arranged, and with a military air, in which there was but little to find fault with. All the mus-

* "At the very time," say the British historians, "that General Burgoyne was receiving the most favorable conditions for himself and his ruined army, the fine village or town of Esopus, at no very great distance, was reduced to ashes, and not a house left standing."

kets had sayonets, and the sharpshooters had rifles. The men all stood so still that we were filled with wonder. Not one of them made a single motion as if he would speak with his neighbor. Nay more, all the lads that stood there in rank and file, kind nature had formed so trim so slender, so nervous, that it was a pleasure to look at them, and we all were surprised at the sight of such a handsome, well-formed race.* In all earnestness," adds he, "English America surpasses the most of Europe in the growth and looks of its male population. The whole nation has a natural turn and talent for war and a soldier's life."

He made himself somewhat merry, however, with the equipments of the officers. A few wore regimentals; and those fashioned to their own notions as to cut and color, being provided by themselves. Brown coats with sea-green facings, white linings and silver trimmings, and gray coats in abundance, with buff facings and cuffs and gilt buttons; in short, ever variety of pattern.

The brigadiers and generals wore uniforms and belts which designated their rank; but most of the colonels and other officers were in their ordinary clothes; a musket and bayonet in hand, and a cartridge-box or powder-horn over the shoulder. But what especially amused him was the variety of uncouth wigs worn by the officers, the lingerings of an uncouth fashion.

Most of the troops thus noticed were the hastily levied militia, the yeomanry of the country. "There were regular regiments also," he said, "which, for want of time and cloth, were not yet equipped in uniform. These had standards with various emblems and mottoes, some of which had for us a very satirical signification.

"But I must say, to the credit of the enemy's regiments," continues he, "that not a man was to be found therein who, as we marched by, made even a sign of taunting, insulting exultation, hatred, or any other evil feeling; on the contrary, they seemed as though they would rather do us honor. As we marched by the great tent of General Gates, he invited in the brigadiers and commanders of regiments, and various refreshments were set before them. Gates is between fifty and sixty years of age; wears his own thin gray hair; is active and friendly, and, on account of the weakness of his eyes, constantly wears spectacles. At head-quarters we met many officers, who treated us with all possible politeness."

We now give another page of the Baroness De Riedesel's fortunes, at this time of the surrender. "My husband's groom brought me a message to join him with the children. I once

* *Briefe aus Neu England. Schlöezer's Briefwechsel.*

more seated myself in my dear calash, and while riding through the American camp was gratified to observe that nobody looked at us with disrespect, but, on the contrary, greeted us, and seemed touched at the sight of a captive mother with her children. I must candidly confess that I did not present myself, though so situated, with much courage to the enemy, for the thing was entirely new to me. When I drew near the tents, a good-looking man advanced towards me, and helping the children from the calash, kissed and caressed them: he then offered me his arm, and tears trembled in his eyes. 'You tremble,' said he; 'do not be alarmed, I pray you.' 'Sir,' cried I, 'a countenance so expressive of benevolence, and the kindness you have evinced towards my children, are sufficient to dispel all apprehensions.' He then ushered me into the tent of General Gates, whom I found engaged in friendly conversation with Generals Burgoyne and Phillips. General Burgoyne said to me, 'You can now be quiet, and free from all apprehension of danger.' I replied that I should indeed be reprehensible, if I felt any anxiety, when our general felt none, and was on such friendly terms with General Gates.

"All the generals remained to dine with General Gates. The gentleman who had received me with so much kindness, came and said to me, 'You may find it embarrassing to be the only lady in such a large company of gentleman; will you come with your children to my tent, and partake of a frugal dinner, offered with the best will?' 'By the kindness you show to me,' returned I, 'you induce me to believe that you have a wife and children.' He informed me that he was General Schuyler. He regaled me with smoked tongues, which were excellent, with beefsteaks, potatoes, fresh butter and bread. Never did a dinner give me more pleasure than this, and I read the same happy change on the countenances of all those around me. That my husband was out of danger, was a still greater joy. After dinner, General Schuyler begged me to pay him a visit at his house at Albany, where he expected that General Burgoyne would also be his guest. I sent to ask my husband's directions, who advised me to accept the invitation." The reception which she met with at Albany, from General Schuyler's wife and daughters, was not, she said, like the reception of enemies, but of the most intimate friends. "They loaded us with kindness," writes she, "and they behaved in the same manner towards General Burgoyne, though he had ordered their splendid establishment to be burnt, and without any necessity, it was said. But all their actions proved, that in the sight of the misfortunes of others they quickly forgot their own."

It was, in fact, the lot of Burgoyne to have coals of fire heaped on his head by those with whom he had been at enmity. One of the first persons whom he had encountered in the American camp was General Schuyler. He attempted to make some explanation or excuse about the recent destruction of his property. Schuyler begged him not to think of it, as the occasion justified it, according to the principles and rules of war.

"He did more," said Burgoyne, in a speech before the House of Commons, "he sent an aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany; in order, as he expressed it, to procure better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. That gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family. In that house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other demonstration of hospitality."

This was indeed realizing the vaunted courtesy and magnanimity of the age of chivalry.

The surrender of Burgoyne was soon followed by the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, the garrisons retiring to the Isle Aux Noix and St. John's. As to the armament on the Hudson, the commanders whom Sir Henry Clinton had left in charge of it, received, in the midst of their desolating career, the astounding intelligence of the capture of the army with which they had come to coöperate. Nothing remained for them, therefore, but to drop down the river and return to New York.

The whole expedition, though it had effected much damage to the Americans, failed to be of essential service to the royal cause. The fortresses in the Highlands could not be maintained, and had been evacuated and destroyed, and the plundering and burning of defenseless towns and villages, and especially the conflagration of Esopus, had given to the whole enterprise the character of a maraud, disgraceful in civilized warfare, and calculated only to inflame more deadly enmity and determined opposition.

NOTE.

The reader may desire to know the sequel of Lady Harriet Ackland's romantic story. Her husband recovered from his wounds, and they returned together to England. Major Ackland retained a grateful sense of the kind treatment they had experienced from the Americans. At a dinner party he had warm words with another British officer, who questioned the American character for courage. A duel ensued, in which the major was killed. The shock to Lady Harriet produced mental derangement. She recovered in the course of a couple of years, and ultimately was married to Mr. Brudenell, the worthy chaplain who had been her companion and protector in the time of her distress.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WASHINGTON ADVANCES TO SKIPPACK CREEK.—THE BRITISH FLEET IN THE DELAWARE.—FORTS AND OBSTRUCTIONS IN THE RIVER.—WASHINGTON MEDITATES AN ATTACK ON THE BRITISH CAMP.—BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN.

HAVING given the catastrophe of the British invasion from the North, we will revert to that part of the year's campaign which was passing under the immediate eye of Washington. We left him encamped at Pott's Grove towards the end of September, giving his troops a few days' repose after their severe fatigues. Being rejoined by Wayne and Smallwood with their brigades, and other troops being arrived from the Jerseys, his force amounted to about eight thousand Continentals and three thousand militia; with these he advanced, on the 30th of September, to Skippack Creek, about fourteen miles from Germantown, where the main body of the British army lay encamped, a detachment under Cornwallis occupying Philadelphia.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, Admiral Lord Howe with great exertions had succeeded in getting his ships of war and transports round from the Chesapeake into the Delaware and had anchored them along the western shore from Reedy Island to Newcastle. They were prevented from approaching nearer by obstructions which the Americans had placed in the river. The lowest of these were at Billingsport (or Bylling's Point), where chevaux-de-frise in the channel of the river were protected by a strong redoubt on the Jersey shore. Higher up were Fort Mifflin on Mud (or Fort) Island. and Fort Mercer on the Jersey shore; with chevaux-de-frise between them. Washington had exerted himself to throw a garrison into Fort Mifflin, and keep up the obstructions of the river. "If these can be maintained," said he, "General Howe's situation will not be the most agreeable; for if his supplies can be stopped by water, it may easily be done by land. To do both shall be my utmost endeavor; and I am not without hope that the acquisition of Philadelphia may, instead of his good fortune, prove his ruin." *

Sir William Howe was perfectly aware of this, and had concerted operations with his brother by land and water, to reduce

* Letter to the President of Congress. Sparks, v. 71.

the forts and clear away the obstructions of the river. With this view he detached a part of his force into the Jerseys, to proceed, in the first instance, against the fortifications at Billingsport.

Washington had been for some days anxiously on the lookout for some opportunity to strike a blow of consequence, when two intercepted letters gave him intelligence of this movement. He immediately determined to make an attack upon the British camp at Germantown, while weakened by the absence of this detachment. To understand the plan of the attack, some description of the British place of encampment is necessary.

Germantown, at that time, was little more than one continued street, extending two miles north and south. The houses were mostly of stone, low and substantial, with steep roofs and projecting eaves. They stood apart from each other, with fruit trees in front and small gardens. Beyond the village, and about a hundred yards east of the road, stood a spacious stone edifice, with ornamented grounds, statues, groves, and shrubbery, the country-seat of Benjamin Chew, chief justice of Pennsylvania previous to the Revolution: we shall have more to say concerning this mansion presently.

Four roads approached the village from above; that is, from the north. The Skippack, which was the main road, led over Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy down to and through the village toward Philadelphia, forming the street of which we have just spoken. On its right, and nearly parallel, was the Monatawny or Ridge road, passing near the Schuylkill, and entering the main road below the village.

On the left of the Skippack or main road, was the Limekiln road, running nearly parallel to it for a time, and then turning towards it, almost at right angles, so as to enter the village at the market-place. Still further to the left or east, and outside of all, was the Old York road, falling into the main road some distance below the village.

The main body of the British forces lay encamped across the lower part of the village, divided into almost equal parts by the main street or Skippack road. The right wing, commanded by General Grant, was to the east of the road, the left wing to the west. Each wing was covered by strong detachments, and guarded by cavalry. General Howe had his head-quarters in the rear.

The advance of the army, composed of the 2d battalion of British light infantry, with a train of artillery, was more than two miles from the main body, on the west of the road, with an outlying picket stationed with two six-pounders at Allen's house

on Mount Airy. About three quarters of a mile in the rear of the light infantry, lay encamped in a field opposite "Chew's House," the 40th regiment of infantry, under Colonel Musgrave.

According to Washington's plan for the attack, Sullivan was to command the right wing, composed of his own division, principally Maryland troops, and the division of General Wayne. He was to be sustained by a *corps de reserve*, under Lord Stirling, composed of Nash's North Carolina and Maxwell's Virginia brigades, and to be flanked by the brigade of General Conway. He was to march down the Skippack road and attack the left wing; at the same time General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was to pass down the Monatawny or Ridge road, and get upon the enemy's left and rear.

Greene with the left wing, composed of his own division and the division of General Stephen, and flanked by McDougall's brigade, was to march down the Limekiln road, so as to enter the village at the market-house. The two divisions were to attack the enemy's right wing in front, McDougall with his brigade to attack it in flank, while Smallwood's division of Maryland militia and Forman's Jersey brigade, making a circuit by the Old York road, were to attack it in the rear. Two thirds of the forces were thus directed against the enemy's right wing, under the idea that, if it could be forced, the whole army must be pushed into the Schuylkill, or compelled to surrender. The attack was to begin on all quarters at day-break.*

About dusk, on the 3d of October, the army left its encampment at Matuchen Hills, by its different routes. Washington, accompanied the right wing. It had fifteen miles of weary march to make over rough roads so that it was after daybreak when the troops emerged from the woods on Chestnut Hill. The morning was dark with a heavy fog. A detachment advanced to attack the enemy's out-picket, stationed at Allen's house. The patrol was led by Captain Allen McLane, a brave Maryland officer, well acquainted with the ground, and with the position of the enemy. He fell in with double sentries, whom he killed with the loss of one man. The alarm, however, was given; the distant roll of a drum and the call to arms, resounded through the murky air. The picket guard, after discharging their two six-pounders, were routed, and retreated down the south side of Mount Airy to the battalion of light infantry who were forming in order of battle. As their pursuers descended into the valley, the sun rose, but was soon obscured.

* Letter of Washington to the President of Congress. Letter of Sullivan to the President of New Hampshire.

Wayne led the attack upon the light infantry. "They broke at first," writes he, "without waiting to receive us, but soon formed again, when a heavy and well-directed fire took place on both sides."

They again gave way, but being supported by the grenadiers, returned to the charge. Sullivan's division and Conway's brigade formed on the west of the road, and joined in the attack; the rest of the troops were too far to the north to render any assistance. The infantry, after fighting bravely for a time, broke and ran, leaving their artillery behind. They were hotly pursued by Wayne. His troops remembered the bloody 20th of September, and the ruthless slaughter of their comrades. "They pushed on with the bayonet," says Wayne, "and took ample vengeance for that night's work." The officers endeavored to restrain their fury towards those who cried for mercy, but to little purpose. It was a terrible *mêlée*. The fog, together with the smoke of the cannonry and musketry, made it almost as dark as night; our people mistaking one another for the enemy frequently exchanged shots before they discovered their error. The whole of the enemy's advance were driven from their camping ground, leaving their tents standing, with all their baggage. Colonel Musgrave, with six companies of the 40th regiment, threw himself into Chew's House, barricaded the doors and lower windows, and took post above stairs; the main torrent of the retreat passed by, pursued by Wayne into the village.

As the residue of this division of the army came up to join in the pursuit, Musgrave and his men opened a fire of musketry upon them from the upper windows of his citadel. This brought them to a halt. Some of the officers were for pushing on; but General Knox stoutly objected, insisting on the old military maxim, never to leave a garrisoned castle in the rear.

His objection unluckily prevailed. A flag was sent with a summons to surrender. A young Virginia, Lieutenant Smith, volunteered to be the bearer. As he was advancing, he was fired upon and received a mortal wound. This house was now cannonaded, but the artillery was too light to have the desired effect. An attempt was made to set fire to the basement. He who attempted it was shot dead from a grated cellar window. Half an hour was thus spent in vain; scarce any of the defenders of the house were injured, though many of the assailants were slain. At length a regiment was left to keep guard upon the mansion and hold its garrison in check, and the rear division again pressed forward.

This half hour's delay, however, of one half of the army, dis-

concerted the action. The divisions and brigades thus separated from each other by the skirmishing attack upon Chew's House, could not be reunited. The fog and smoke rendered all objects indistinct at thirty yards' distance; the different parts of the army knew nothing of the position or movements of each other, and the commander-in-chief could take no view nor gain any information of the situation of the whole. The original plan of attack was only effectively carried into operation in the centre. The flanks and rear of the enemy were nearly unmolested; still the action, though disconnected, irregular and partial, was animated in various quarters. Sullivan, being reinforced by Nash's North Carolina troops and Conway's brigade, pushed on a mile beyond Chew's House, where the left wing of the enemy gave way before him.

Greene and Stephen, with their divisions, having had to make a circuit, were late in coming into action, and became separated from each other, part of Stephen's division being arrested by a heavy fire from Chew's House and pausing to return it; Greene, however, with his division, comprising the brigades of Muhlenberg and Scott, pressed rapidly forward, drove an advance regiment of light infantry before him, took a number of prisoners, and made his way quite to the market-house in the centre of the village, where he encountered the right wing of the British drawn up to receive him. The impetuosity of his attack had an evident effect upon the enemy, who began to waver. Forman and Smallwood, with the Jersey and Maryland militia, were just showing themselves on the right flank of the enemy, and our troops seemed on the point of carrying the whole encampment. At this moment a singular panic seized our army. Various causes are assigned for it. Sullivan alleges that his troops had expended all their cartridges, and were alarmed by seeing the enemy gathering on their left, and by the cry of a light horseman, that the enemy were getting round them. Wayne's division, which had pushed the enemy three miles, was alarmed by the approach of a large body of American troops on its left flank, which it mistook for foes, and fell back in defiance of every effort of its officers to rally it. In its retreat it came upon Stephen's division and threw it into a panic, being, in its turn, mistaken for the enemy; thus all fell into confusion, and our army fled from their own victory.

In the meantime, the enemy having recovered from the first effects of the surprise, advanced in their turn. General Grey brought up the left wing, and pressed upon the American troops as they receded. Lord Cornwallis, with a squadron of light horse from Philadelphia, arrived just in time to join in the pursuit.

The retreat of the Americans was attended with less loss than might have been expected, and they carried off all their cannon and wounded. This was partly owing to the good generalship of Greene, in keeping up a retreating fight with the enemy for nearly five miles; and partly to a check given by Wayne, who turned his cannon upon the enemy from an eminence, near White Marsh Church, and brought them to a stand. The retreat continued through the day to Perkiomen Creek, a distance of twenty miles.

The loss of the enemy in this action is stated by them to be seventy-one killed, four hundred and fifteen wounded, and fourteen missing: among the killed was Brigadier-general Agnew. The American loss was one hundred and fifty killed, five hundred and twenty-one wounded, and about four hundred taken prisoners. Among the killed was General Nash of North Carolina. Among the prisoners was Colonel Matthews of Virginia, who commanded a Virginia regiment in the left wing. Most of his officers and men were killed or wounded in fighting bravely near the market-house, and he himself received several bayonet wounds.

Speaking of Washington's conduct amidst the perplexities of this confused battle, General Sullivan writes, "I saw, with great concern, our brave commander-in-chief exposing himself to the hottest fire of the enemy, in such a manner, that regard for my country obliged me to ride to him, and beg him to retire. He, to gratify me and some others, withdrew to a small distance, but his anxiety for the fate of the day soon brought him up again, where he remained till our troops had retreated."

The sudden retreat of the army gave him surprise, chagrin, and mortification. "Every account," said he, subsequently, in a letter to the President of Congress, "confirms the opinion I at first entertained, that our troops retreated at the instant when victory was declaring herself in our favor. The tumult, disorder, and even despair, which, it seems, had taken place in the British army, were scarcely to be paralleled; and, it is said, so strongly did the ideas of a retreat prevail, that Chester was fixed on for their rendezvous. I can discover no other cause for not improving this happy opportunity, than the extreme haziness of the weather."

So also Captain Heth of Virginia, who was in the action: "What makes this inglorious flight more grating to us is, that we know the enemy had orders to retreat, and rendezvous at Chester; and that upwards of two thousand Hessians had actually crossed the Schuylkill for that purpose; that the Tories were in the utmost distress, and moving out of the city; that

our friends confined in the new jail made it ring with shouts of joy; that we passed, in pursuing them, upwards of twenty pieces of cannon, their tents standing filled with their choicest baggage; in fine, everything was as we could wish, when the above flight took place.”*

No one was more annoyed than Wayne. “Fortune smiled on us for full three hours,” writes he, “the enemy were broke, dispersed, and flying in all quarters—we were in possession of their whole encampment, together with their artillery park, etc., etc. A *wind-mill* attack was made upon a house into which six light companies had thrown themselves, to avoid our bayonets. Our troops were deceived by this attack, thinking it something formidable. They fell back to assist,—the enemy believing it to be a retreat, followed,—confusion ensued, and we ran away from the arms of victory open to receive us.”

In fact, as has justly been observed by an experienced officer, the plan of attack was too widely extended for strict concert, and too complicated for precise coöperation, as it had to be conducted in the night, and with a large proportion of undisciplined militia; and yet, a bewildering fog alone appears to have prevented its complete success.

But although the Americans were balked of the victory, which seemed within their grasp, the impression made by the audacity of this attempt upon Germantown, was greater, we are told, than that caused by any single incident of the war after Lexington and Bunker’s Hill.†

A British military historian, a contemporary, observes: “In this action the Americans acted upon the offensive; and though repulsed with loss, showed themselves a formidable adversary, capable of charging with resolution and retreating with good order. The hope, therefore, entertained from the effect of any action with them as decisive, and likely to put a speedy termination to the war, was exceedingly abated.”‡

The battle had its effect also in France. The Count De Vergennes observed to the American commissioners in Paris on their first interview, that nothing struck him so much as General Washington’s attacking and giving battle to General Howe’s army; that to bring an army raised within a year to this pass promised everything.

The effect on the army itself may be judged from letters written at the time by officers to their friends. “Though we

* Letter to Col. Lamb in the *Lamb Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc., and quoted in the *Life of Lamb*, p. 183.

† Reed’s *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 319.

‡ *Civil War in America*, i. 269.

gave away a complete victory," writes one, "we have learned this valuable truth, that we are able to beat them by vigorous exertion, and that we are far superior in point of swiftness. We are in high spirits; every action gives our troops fresh vigor, and a greater opinion of their own strength. Another bout or two must make the situation of the enemy very disagreeable."*

Another writes to his father: "For my own part, I am so fully convinced of the justice of the cause in which we are contending, and that Providence, in its own good time, will succeed and bless it, that, were I to see twelve of the United States overrun by our cruel invaders, I should still believe the thirteenth would not only save itself, but also work out the deliverance of the others."†

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WASHINGTON AT WHITE MARSH.—MEASURES TO CUT OFF THE ENEMY'S SUPPLIES.—THE FORTS ON THE DELAWARE REINFORCED.—COLONEL GREENE OF RHODE ISLAND AT FORT MERCER.—ATTACK AND DEFENSE OF THAT FORT.—DEATH OF COUNT DONOP.

WASHINGTON remained a few days at Perkiomen Creek, to give his army time to rest, and recover from the disorder incident to a retreat. Having been reinforced by the arrival of twelve hundred Rhode Island troops from Peekskill, under General Varnum, and nearly a thousand Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania troops, he gradually drew nearer to Philadelphia, and took a strong position at White Marsh, within fourteen miles of that city. By a resolution of Congress, all persons taken within thirty miles of any place occupied by British troops, in the act of conveying supplies to them, were subjected to martial law. Acting under the resolution, Washington detached large bodies of militia to scour the roads above the city, and between the Schuylkill and Chester, to intercept all supplies going to the enemy.

On the forts and obstructions in the river, Washington mainly counted to complete the harassment of Philadelphia. These defenses had been materially impaired. The works at Billingsport had been attacked and destroyed, and some of the enemy's

* Capt. Heath to Col. Lamb.

† Major Shaw. *Memoirs*, by Josiah Quincy p. 41.

ships had forced their way through the chevaux-de-frise placed there. The American frigate *Delaware*, stationed in the river between the upper forts and Philadelphia, had run aground before a British battery, and been captured.

It was now the great object of the Howes to reduce and destroy, and of Washington to defend and maintain the remaining forts and obstructions. Fort Mifflin, which we have already mentioned, was erected on a low, green, reedy island in the Delaware, a few miles below Philadelphia, and below the mouth of the Schuylkill. It consisted of a strong redoubt, with extensive outworks and batteries. There was but a narrow channel between the island and the Pennsylvania shore. The main channel, practicable for ships, was on the other side. In this were sunk strong chevaux-de-frise, difficult either to be weighed or cut through, and dangerous to any ships that might run against them; subjected as they would be to the batteries of Fort Mifflin on one side, and on the other to those of Fort Mercer, a strong work at Red Bank on the Jersey shore.

Fort Mifflin was garrisoned by troops of the Maryland line, under Lieutenant-colonel Samuel Smith of Baltimore; and had kept up a brave defense against batteries erected by the enemy on the Pennsylvania shore. A reinforcement of Virginia troops made the garrison between three and four hundred strong.

Floating batteries, galleys, and fire-ships, commanded by Commodore Hazelwood, were stationed under the forts and about the river.

Fort Mercer had hitherto been garrisoned by militia, but Washington now replaced them by four hundred of General Varnum's Rhode Island Continentals. Colonel Christopher Green was put in command; a brave officer who had accompanied Arnold in his rough expedition to Canada, and fought valiantly under the walls of Quebec. "The post with which you are intrusted," writes Washington in his letter of instructions, "is of the utmost importance to America. The whole defense of the Delaware depends upon it; and consequently all the enemy's hopes of keeping Philadelphia, and finally succeeding in the present campaign."

Colonel Greene was accompanied by Captain Mauduit Duplessis, who was to have the direction of the artillery. He was a young French engineer of great merit, who had volunteered in the American cause, and received a commission from Congress. The chevaux-de-frise in the river had been constructed under his superintendence.

Greene aided by Duplessis, made all haste to put Fort Mercer in a state of defense; but before the outworks were com-

pleted, he was surprised (October 22) by the appearance of a large force emerging from a wood within cannon-shot of the fort. Their uniforms showed them to be Hessians. They were, in fact, four battalions, twelve hundred strong, of grenadiers, picked men, besides light infantry and chasseurs, all commanded by Count Donop, who had figured in the last year's campaign.

Colonel Greene, in nowise dismayed by the superiority of the enemy, forming in glistening array before the wood, prepared for a stout resistance. In a little while an officer was descried, riding slowly up with a flag, accompanied by a drummer. Greene ordered his men to keep out of sight, that the fort might appear but slightly garrisoned.

When within proper distance, the drummer sounded a parley and the officer summoned the garrison to surrender; with a threat of no quarter in case of resistance.

Greene's reply was, that the post would be defended to the last extremity.

The flag rode back and made report. Forthwith the Hessians were seen at work throwing up a battery within half a mile of the outworks. It was finished by four o'clock, and opened a heavy cannonade, under cover of which the enemy were preparing to approach.

As the American outworks were but half finished, and were too extensive to be manned by the garrison, it was determined by Greene and Duplessis that the troops should make but a short stand there; to gall the enemy in their approach, and then retire within the redoubt, which was defended by a deep intrenchment, boarded and fraised.

Donop led on his troops in gallant style, under cover of a heavy fire from his battery. They advanced in two columns, to attack the outworks in two places. As they advanced, they were excessively galled by a flanking fire from the American galleys and batteries, and by sharp volleys from the outworks. The latter, however, as had been concerted, were quickly abandoned by the garrison. The enemy entered at two places, and imagining the day their own, the two columns pushed on with shouts to storm different parts of the redoubt. As yet no troops were to be seen; but as one of the columns approached the redoubt on the north side, a tremendous discharge of grape-shot and musketry burst forth from the embrasures in front, and a half-masked battery on the left. The slaughter was prodigious; the column was driven back in confusion. Count Donop, with the other column, in attempting the south side of the redoubt, had passed the abatis; some of his men had traversed

the fosse; others had clambered over the pickets, when a similar tempest of artillery and musketry burst upon them. Some were killed on the spot, many were wounded, and the rest were driven out: Donop himself was wounded, and remained on the spot; Lieutenant-colonel Mingerode, the second in command, was also dangerously wounded. Several others of the best officers were slain or disabled. Lieutenant-colonel Linsing, the oldest remaining officer, endeavored to draw off the troops in good order, but in vain; they retreated in confusion, hotly pursued, and were again cut up in their retreat by the flanking fire from the galleys and floating batteries.

The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded, in this brief but severe action, was about four hundred men. That of the Americans, eight killed and twenty-nine wounded.

As Captain Mauduit Duplessis was traversing the scene of slaughter after the repulse, he was accosted by a voice from among the slain: "Whoever you are, draw me hence." It was the unfortunate Count Donop. Duplessis had him conveyed to a house near the fort, where every attention was paid to his comfort. He languished for three days, during which Duplessis was continually at his bedside. "This is finishing a noble career early," said the count sadly, as he found his death approaching,—then, as it conscious of the degrading service in which he had fallen, hired out by his prince to aid a foreign power in quelling the brave struggle of a people for their liberty, and contrasting it with that in which the chivalrous youth by his bedside was engaged,—"I die," added he bitterly, "the victim of my ambition, and of the avarice of my sovereign."* He was but thirty-seven years of age at the time of his death.

According to the plan of the enemy, Fort Mifflin, opposite to Fort Mercer, was to have been attacked at the same time by water. The force employed was the *Augusta* of sixty-four guns, the *Roebuck* of forty-four, two frigates, the *Merlin* sloop of eighteen guns, and a galley. They forced their way through the lower line of chevaux-de-frise; but the *Augusta* and *Merlin* ran aground below the second line, and every effort to get them off proved fruitless. To divert attention from their situation, the other vessels drew as near to Fort Mifflin as they could, and opened a cannonade; but the obstructions in the river had so altered the channel that they could not get within very effective distance. They kept up a fire upon the fort throughout the evening, and recommenced it early in the morning, as did likewise the British batteries on the Pennsyl-

* De Chastellux, vol. i. p. 266.

vania shore; hoping that under cover of it the ships might be got off. A strong adverse wind, however, kept the tide from rising sufficiently to float them.

The Americans discovered their situation, and sent down four fire-ships to destroy them, but without effect. A heavy fire was now opened upon them from the galleys and floating batteries. It was warmly returned. In the course of the action, a red-hot shot set the *Augusta* on fire. It was impossible to check the flames. All haste was made with boats to save the crew, while the other ships drew off as fast as possible to get out of the reach of the explosion. She blew up, however, while the second lieutenant, the chaplain, the gunner, and several of the crew were yet on board, most of whom perished. The *Merlin* was now set on fire and abandoned; the *Roebuck* and the other vessels dropped down the river, and the attack on Fort Mifflin was given up.

These signal repulses of the enemy had an animating effect on the public mind, and were promptly noticed by Congress. Colonel Greene, who commanded at Fort Mercer, Lieutenant-colonel Smith of Maryland, who commanded at Fort Mifflin, and Commodore Hazelwood, who commanded the galleys, received the thanks of that body; and subsequently, a sword was voted to each, as a testimonial of distinguished merit.

CHAPTER XL.

DE KALB COMMISSIONED MAJOR-GENERAL.—PRETENSIONS OF CONWAY.—THWARTED BY WASHINGTON.—CONWAY CABAL.—GATES REMISS IN CORRESPONDENCE.—DILATORY IN FORWARDING TROOPS.—MISSION OF HAMILTON TO GATES.—WILKINSON BEARER OF DESPATCHES TO CONGRESS.—A TARDY TRAVELER.—HIS REWARD.—CONWAY CORRESPONDENCE DETECTED.—WASHINGTON'S APOLOGY FOR HIS ARMY.

WE have heretofore had occasion to advert to the annoyances and perplexities occasioned to Washington by the claims and pretensions of foreign officers who had entered into the service. Among the officers who came out with Lafayette, was the Baron De Kalb, a German by birth, but who had long been employed in the French service, and though a silver-haired veteran, sixty years of age, was yet fresh and active and vigorous; which some attributed to his being a rigid water drinker. In the month of September, Congress had given him the commission of major-general, to date with that of Lafayette.

This instantly produced a remonstrance from Brigadier-general Conway, the Gallic Hibernian, of whom we have occasionally made mention, who considered himself slighted and forgot, in their giving a superior rank to his own to a person who had not rendered the cause the least service, and who had been his inferior in France. He claimed, therefore, for himself, the rank of major-general, and was supported in his pretensions by persons both in and out of Congress; especially by Mifflin, the quartermaster-general.

Washington had already been disgusted by the overweening presumption of Conway, and was surprised to hear that his application was likely to be successful. He wrote on the 17th of October, to Richard Henry Lee, then in Congress, warning him that such an appointment would be as unfortunate a measure as ever was adopted—one that would give a fatal blow to the existence of the army. "Upon so interesting a subject," observes he, "I must speak plainly. The duty I owe my country, the ardent desire I have to promote its true interests, and justice to individuals, require this of me. General Conway's merit as an officer, and his importance in this army, exist more in his own imagination than in reality. For it is a maxim with him to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want anything which is to be obtained by importunity. . . . I would ask why the youngest brigadier in the service should be put over the heads of the oldest, and thereby take rank and command of gentlemen who but yesterday were his seniors; gentlemen who, as I will be bound to say in behalf of some of them at least, are of sound judgment and unquestionable bravery. . . . This truth I am well assured of, that they will not serve under him. I leave you to guess, therefore, at the situation this army would be in at so important a crisis, if this event should take place."

This opposition to his presumptuous aspirations, at once threw Conway into a faction forming under the auspices of General Mifflin. This gentleman had recently tendered his resignation of the commission of major-general and quartermaster-general on the plea of ill-health, but was busily engaged in intrigues against the commander-in-chief, towards whom he had long cherished a secret hostility. Conway now joined with him heart and hand, and soon became so active and prominent a member of the faction that it acquired the name of *Conway's Cabal*. The object was to depreciate the military character of Washington, in comparison with that of Gates, to whom was attributed the whole success of the Northern campaign. Gates was perfectly ready for such an elevation. He was intoxicated

by his good fortune, and seemed to forget that he had reaped where he had not sown, and that the defeat of Burgoyne had been insured by plans concerted and put in operation before his arrival in the Northern Department.

In fact, in the excitement of his vanity, Gates appears to have forgotten that there was a commander-in-chief, to whom he was accountable. He neglected to send him any despatch on the subject of the surrender of Burgoyne, contenting himself with sending one to Congress, then sitting at Yorktown. Washington was left to hear of the important event by casual rumor, and was for several days in anxious uncertainty, until he received a copy of the capitulation in a letter from General Putnam.

Gates was equally neglectful to inform him of the disposition he intended to make of the army under his command. He delayed even to forward Morgan's rifle corps, though their services were no longer needed in his camp, and were so much required in the south. It was determined, therefore, in a council of war, that one of Washington's staff should be sent to Gates to represent the critical state of affairs, and that a large reinforcement from the Northern army would, in all probability, reduce General Howe to the same situation with Burgoyne, should he remain in Philadelphia, without being able to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and open a free communication with his shipping.

Colonel Alexander Hamilton, his youthful but intelligent aide-de-camp, was charged with this mission. He bore a letter from Washington to Gates, dated October 30th, of which the following is an extract :

"By this opportunity, I do myself the pleasure to congratulate you on the signal success of the army under your command in compelling General Burgoyne and his whole force to surrender themselves as prisoners of war ; an event that does the highest honor to the American arms, and which, I hope, will be attended with the most extensive and happy consequences. At the same time I cannot but regret that a matter of such magnitude, and so interesting to our general operations, should have reached me by report only ; or through the channel of letters not bearing that authenticity which the importance of it required, and which it would have received by a line under your signature stating the simple fact."

Such was the calm and dignified notice of an instance of official disrespect, almost amounting to insubordination. It is doubtful whether Gates in his state of mental effervescence, felt the noble severity of the rebuke.

The officer whom Gates had employed as bearer of his despatch to Congress, was Wilkinson, his adjutant-general and devoted sycophant: a man at once pompous and servile. He was so long on the road that the articles of the treaty according to his own account, reached the grand army before he did the Congress. Even after his arrival at Yorktown he required three days to arrange his papers, preparing to deliver them in style. At length, eighteen days after the surrender of Burgoyne had taken place, he formerly laid the documents concerning it before Congress, preluding them with a message in the name of Gates, but prepared the day before by himself, and following them up by comments, explanatory and eulogistic, of his own.

He evidently expected to produce a great effect by this rhetorical display, and to be signally rewarded for his good tidings, but Congress were as slow in expressing their sense of his services, as he had been in rendering them. He swelled and chafed under this neglect, but affected to despise it. In a letter to his patron, Gates, he observes: "I have not been honored with any mark of distinction from Congress. Indeed, should I receive no testimony of their approbation of my conduct, I shall not be mortified. My hearty contempt of the world will shield me from such pitiful sensations." *

A proposal was at length made in Congress that a sword should be voted to him as the bearer of such auspicious tidings; upon which Dr. Witherspoon, a shrewd Scot, exclaimed, "I think ye'll better gie the lad *a pair of spurs*." †

A few days put an end to Wilkinson's suspense, and probably reconciled him to the world; he was breveted a brigadier-general. A fortuitous circumstance, which we shall explain hereafter, apprised Washington about this time that a correspondence, derogatory to his military character and conduct, was going on between General Conway and General Gates. It was a parallel case with Lee's correspondence of the preceding year; and Washington conducted himself in it with the same dignified forbearance, contenting himself with letting Conway know, by the following brief note, dated November 9th, that his correspondence was detected.

"SIR,—A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph,—'In a letter from General Conway to

* *Gates' Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

† *Life of Lord Stirling*, by W. A. Duer, p. 182.

General Gates, he says, "*Heaven has determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counselors would have ruined it.*"

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

The brevity of this note rendered it the more astounding. It was a hand-grenade thrown into the midst of the cabal. The effect upon other members we shall show hereafter : it seems, at first, to have prostrated Conway. An epistle of his friend Mifflin to Gates intimates, that Conway endeavored to palliate to Washington the censorious expressions in his letter, by pleading the careless freedom of language indulged in familiar letter writing ; no other record of such explanation remains, and that probably was not received as satisfactory. Certain it is, he immediately sent in his resignation. To some he alleged, as an excuse for resigning, the disparaging way in which he had been spoken of by some members of Congress ; to others he observed, that the campaign was at an end, and there was a prospect of a French war. The real reason he kept to himself, and Washington suffered it to remain a secret. His resignation, however, was not accepted by Congress ; on the contrary, he was supported by the cabal, and was advanced to further honors, which we shall specify hereafter.

In the meantime, the cabal went on to make invidious comparisons between the achievements of the two armies, deeply derogatory to that under Washington. Publicly, he took no notice of them ; but they drew from him the following apology for his army, in a noble and characteristic letter to his friend, the celebrated Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia. "The design of this," writes he, "is only to inform you, and with great truth I can do it, strange as it may seem, that the army which I have had under my immediate command, has not, at any one time, since General Howe's landing at the Head of Elk, been equal in point of numbers to his. In ascertaining this, I do not confine myself to continental troops, but comprehend militia. The disaffected and lukewarm in this State, in whom unhappily it too much abounds, taking advantage of the distractions in the government, prevented those vigorous exertions, which an invaded State ought to have yielded. . . . I was left to fight two battles, in order, if possible, to save Philadelphia, with less numbers than composed the army of my antagonist, whilst the world has given us at least double. This impression, though mortifying in some points of view, I have been obliged to encourage ; because, next to being strong, it is

best to be thought so by the enemy ; and to this cause, principally, I think, is to be attributed the slow movements of General Howe.

"How different the case in the Northern Department ! There the States of New York and New England, resolving to crush Burgoyne, continued pouring in their troops, till the surrender of that army ; at which time not less than fourteen thousand militia, as I have been informed, were actually in General Gates' camp, and those composed, for the most part, of the best yeomanry in the country, well armed, and in many instances supplied with provisions of their own carrying. Had the same spirit pervaded the people of this and the neighboring States, we might before this time have had General Howe nearly in the situation of General Burgoyne.

"My own difficulties, in the course of the campaign, have been not a little increased by the extra aid of continental troops, which the gloomy prospect of our affairs in the north immediately after the reduction of Ticonderoga, induced me to spare from this army. But it is to be hoped that all will yet end well. IF THE CAUSE IS ADVANCED, INDIFFERENT IS IT TO ME WHERE OR IN WHAT QUARTER IT HAPPENS."

We have put the last sentence in capitals, for it speaks the whole soul of Washington. Glory with him is a secondary consideration. Let those who win, wear the laurel—sufficient for him is the advancement of the cause.

NOTE.

We subjoin an earnest appeal of Washington to Thomas Wharton, president of Pennsylvania, on the 17th of October, urging him to keep up the quota of troops demanded of the State by Congress, and to furnish additional aid. "I assure you, sir," writes he, "it is a matter of astonishment to every part of the continent to hear that Pennsylvania, the most opulent and populous of all the States, has but twelve hundred militia in the field, at a time when the enemy are endeavoring to make themselves completely masters of, and fix their quarters in her capital." And Major-general Armstrong, commanding the Pennsylvania militia, writes at the same time to the Council of his State: "Be not deceived with wrong notions of General Washington's numbers; be assured he wants your aid. Let the brave step forth, their example will animate the many. You all speak well of our commander-in-chief at a distance; don't you want to see him, and pay him one generous, one martial visit, when kindly invited to his camp near the end of a long campaign ? There you will see for yourselves the unremitting zeal and toils of all the day and half the night, multiplied into years, without seeing house or home of his own, without murmur or complaint; but believes and calls this arduous task the service of his country and of his God."

CHAPTER XLI.

FURTHER HOSTILITIES ON THE DELAWARE.—FORT MIFFLIN ATTACKED.—BRAVELY DEFENDED.—REDUCED.—MISSION OF HAMILTON TO GATES.—VISITS THE CAMPS OF GOVERNOR CLINTON AND PUTNAM ON THE HUDSON.—PUTNAM ON HIS HOBBY-HORSE.—DIFFICULTIES IN PROCURING REINFORCEMENTS.—INTRIGUES OF THE CABAL.—LETTERS OF LOVELL AND MIFFLIN TO GATES.—THE WORKS AT RED BANK DESTROYED.—THE ENEMY IN POSSESSION OF THE DELAWARE.

THE non-arrival of reinforcements from the Northern army continued to embarrass Washington's operations. The enemy were making preparations for further attempts upon forts Mercer and Mifflin. General Howe was constructing redoubts and batteries on Province Island, on the west side of the Delaware, within five hundred yards of Fort Mifflin, and mounting them with heavy cannon. Washington consulted with his general officers what was to be done. Had the army received the expected reinforcements from the North, it might have detached sufficient force to the west side of the Schuylkill to dislodge the enemy from Providence Island; but at present it would require almost the whole of the army for the purpose. This would leave the public stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allentown, uncovered, as well as several of the hospitals. It would also leave the post at Red Bank unsupported, through which Fort Mifflin was reinforced and supplied. It was determined, therefore, to await the arrival of the expected reinforcements from the North, before making any alteration in the disposition of the army. In the meantime, the garrisons of forts Mercer and Mifflin were increased, and General Varnum was stationed at Red Bank with his brigade, to be at hand to render reinforcements to either of them as occasion might require.

On the 10th of November, General Howe commenced a heavy fire upon Fort Mifflin from his batteries, which mounted eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-two pounders. Colonel Smith doubted the competency of his feeble garrison to defend the works against a force so terribly effective, and wrote to Washington accordingly. The latter in reply represented the great importance of the works, and trusted they would be maintained

to the last extremity. General Varnum was instructed to send over fresh troops occasionally to relieve those in the garrison, and to prevail upon as many as possible of the militia to go over. The latter could be employed at night upon the works to repair the damage sustained in the day, and might, if they desired it, return to Red Bank in the morning.

Washington's orders and instructions were faithfully obeyed. Major Fleury, a brave French officer, already mentioned, acquitted himself with intelligence and spirit as engineer; but an incessant cannonade and bombardment for several days, defied all repairs. The block-houses were demolished, the palisades beaten down, the guns dismounted, the barracks reduced to ruins. Captain Treat, a young officer of a great merit, who commanded the artillery, was killed, as were several non-commissioned officers and privates; and a number were wounded.

The survivors, who were not wounded, were exhausted by want of sleep, hard duty, and constant exposure to the rain. Colonel Smith himself was disabled by severe contusions, and obliged to retire to Red Bank.

The fort was in ruins; there was danger of its being carried by storm, but the gallant Fleury thought it might yet be defended with the aid of fresh troops. Such were furnished from Varnum's brigade: Lieutenant-colonel Russell, of the Connecticut line, replaced Colonel Smith. He, in his turn, was obliged to relinquish the command through fatigue and ill health, and was succeeded by Major Thayer of Rhode Island, aided by Captain (afterwards commodore) Talbot, who had distinguished himself in the preceding year by an attack on a ship of war in the Hudson. The present was an occasion that required men of desperate valor.

On the fourth day the enemy brought a large Indiaman, cut down to a floating battery, to bear upon the works; but though it opened a terrible fire, it was silenced before night. The next day several ships of war got within gunshot. Two prepared to attack it in front; others brought their guns to bear on Fort Mercer; while two made their way into the narrow channel between Mud Island and the Pennsylvania shore, to operate with the British batteries erected there.

At a concerted signal a cannonade was opened from all quarters. The heroic little garrison stood the fire without flinching; the danger, however, was growing imminent. The batteries on Province Island enfiladed the works. The ships in the inner channel approached so near as to throw hand-grenades into the fort, while marines stationed in the round-tops stood ready to pick off any of the garrison that came in sight.

The scene now became awful; incessant firing from ships, forts, gondolas, and floating batteries, with clouds of sulphurous smoke, and the deafening thunder of cannon. Before night there was hardly a fortification to defend; palisades were shivered, guns dismounted, the whole parapet leveled. There was terrible slaughter; most of the company of artillery were destroyed. Fleury himself was wounded. Captain Talbot received a wound in the wrist, but continued bravely fighting until disabled by another wound in the hip.*

To hold out longer was impossible. Major Thayer made preparations to evacuate the fort in the night. Everything was removed in the evening, that could be conveyed away without too much exposure to the murderous fire from the round-tops. The wounded were taken over to Red Bank, accompanied by part of the garrison. Thayer remained with forty men until eleven o'clock, when they set fire to what was combustible of the fort they had so nobly defended, and crossed to Red Bank by the light of its flames.

The loss of this fort was deeply regretted by Washington, though he gave high praise to the officers and men of the garrison. Colonel Smith was voted a sword by Congress, and Fleury received the commission of lieutenant-colonel.

Washington still hoped to keep possession of Red Bank, and thereby prevent the enemy from weighing the chevaux-de-frise before the frost obliged their ships to quit the river. "I am anxiously waiting the arrival of the troops from the northward," writes he, "who ought, from the time they have had my orders, to have been here before this. Colonel Hamilton, one of my aides, is up the North River, doing all he can to push them forward, but he writes me word, that he finds many unaccountable delays thrown in his way. The want of these troops has embarrassed all my measures exceedingly."

The delays in question will best be explained by a few particulars concerning the mission of Colonel Hamilton. On his way to the head-quarters of Gates, at Albany, he found Governor Clinton and General Putnam encamped on the opposite sides of the Hudson, just above the Highlands; the governor at New Windsor, Putnam at Fishkill. About a mile from New Windsor, Hamilton met Morgan and his riflemen, early in the morning of the 2d of November, on the march for Washington's camp, having been thus tardily detached by Gates. Hamilton urged him to hasten on with all possible despatch, which he promised to do. The colonel had expected to find matters in such a train, that he would have little to do but hurry on ample

* *Life of Talbot*, by Henry T. Tuckerman, p. 31.

reinforcements already on the march; whereas, he found that a large part of the Northern army was to remain in and about Albany, about four thousand men to be spared to the commander-in-chief; the rest were to be stationed on the east side of the Hudson with Putnam, who had held a council of war how to dispose of them. The old general, in fact, had for some time past been haunted by a project of an attack upon New York, in which he had twice been thwarted, and for which the time seemed propitious, now that most of the British troops were reported to have gone from New York to reinforce General Howe. Hamilton rather disconcerted his project by directing him, in Washington's name, to hurry forward two continental brigades to the latter, together with Warner's militia brigade; also to order to Red Bank a body of Jersey militia about to cross to Peekskill.

Having given these directions, Hamilton hastened on to Albany. He found still less disposition on the part of Gates to furnish the troops required. There was no certainty, he said, that Sir Henry Clinton had gone to join General Howe. There was a possibility of his returning up the river, which would expose the arsenal at Albany to destruction, should that city be left bare of troops. The New England States, too, would be left open to the ravages and depredations of the enemy; beside, it would put it out of his power to attempt anything against Ticonderoga, an undertaking of great importance, in which he might engage in the winter. In a word, Gates had schemes of his own, to which those of the commander-in-chief must give way.

Hamilton felt, he says, how embarrassing a task it was for one so young as himself to oppose the opinions and plans of a veteran, whose successes had elevated him to the highest importance; though he considered his reasonings unsubstantial, and merely calculated to "catch the Eastern people." It was with the greatest difficulty he prevailed on Gates to detach the brigades of Poor and Patterson to the aid of the commander-in-chief; and, finding reinforcements fall thus short from this quarter, he wrote to Putnam to forward an additional thousand of continental troops from his camp. "I doubt," writes he subsequently to Washington, "whether you would have had a man from the Northern army, if the whole could have been kept at Albany with any decency."

Having concluded his mission to General Gates, Hamilton returned to the camp of Governor Clinton. The worthy governor seemed the general officer best disposed in this quarter to promote the public weal, independent of personal con-

siderations. He had recently expressed his opinion to General Gates, that the army under Washington ought at present to be the chief object of attention, "for on its success everything worth regarding depended."

The only need of troops in this quarter at present, was to protect the country from little plundering parties, and to carry on the works necessary for the defense of the river. The latter was the governor's main thought. He was eager to reconstruct the fortresses out of which he had been so forcibly ejected; or rather to construct new ones in a better place, about West Point, where obstructions were again to be extended across the river.*

Putnam, on the contrary, wished to keep as much force as possible under his control. The old general was once more astiride of what Hamilton termed his "hobby-horse," an expedition against New York. He had neglected to forward the troops which had been ordered to the South; not the least attention had been paid by him to Hamilton's order from Albany, in Washington's name, for the detachment of an additional thousand of troops. Some, which had come down from Albany, had been marched by him to Tarrytown: he himself had reconnoitered the country almost down to King's Bridge, and was now advanced to the neighborhood of White Plains. "Everything," writes Hamilton, "is sacrificed to the whim of taking New York." The young colonel was perplexed how to proceed with the brave-hearted, but somewhat wrong-headed old general; who was in as bellicose a mood, now that he was mounted on his hobby, as when at the siege of Boston he mounted the prize mortar "Congress," and prayed for gunpowder.

Hamilton, in his perplexity, consulted Governor Clinton. The latter agreed with him that an attempt against New York would be a mere "suicidal parade," wasting time and men. The city at present was no object, even if it could be taken, and to take it would require men that could ill be spared from more substantial purposes. The governor, however, understood the character and humors of his old coadjutor, and in his down-right way, advised Hamilton to send an order in the most emphatical terms to General Putnam, to despatch all the continental troops under him to Washington's assistance, and to detain the militia instead of them.

* Governor Clinton and myself have been down to view the forts, and are both of opinion that a boom thrown across at Fort Constitution, and a battery on each side of the river, would answer a much better purpose than at Fort Montgomery, as the garrison would be reinforced by militia with more expedition, and the ground much more definable (defendable ?)—Putnam to Washington, 7th Nov., 1777.—*Sparks' Cor. of the Rev.* ii. 30.

A little of the governor's own hobby, by the way, showed itself in his councils. "He thinks," writes Hamilton, "that there is no need of more continental troops here than a few, to give a spur to the militia in working upon the fortifications."

The "emphatical" letter of Hamilton had the effect the governor intended. It unhorsed the belligerent veteran when in full career. The project against New York was again given up and the reinforcements reluctantly ordered to the South. "I am sorry to say," writes Hamilton, "the disposition for marching in the officers, and men in general, of these troops, does not keep pace with my wishes, or the exigency of the occasion. They have unfortunately imbibed an idea that they have done their part of the business of the campaign, and are now entitled to repose. This, and the want of pay, make them adverse to a long march at this advanced season."

Governor Clinton borrowed six thousand dollars for Hamilton, to enable him to put some of the troops in motion; "indeed," writes the colonel, "he has been the only man who has done anything to remove these difficulties. Hamilton advised that the command of the post should be given to the governor, if he would accept of it, and Putnam should be recalled; "whose blunders and caprices," said he, "are endless."

Washington, however, knew too well the innate worth and sterling patriotism of the old general, to adopt a measure that might deeply mortify him. The enterprise, too, on which the veteran had been bent, was one which he himself had approved of when suggested under other circumstances. He contented himself, therefore, with giving him a reprimand in the course of a letter, for his present dilatoriness in obeying the orders of his commander-in-chief. "I cannot but say," writes he, "there has been more delay in the march of the troops than I think necessary; and I could wish, that in future my orders may be immediately complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will be upon me, not upon you."

Washington found it more necessary than usual, at this moment, to assert his superior command, from the attempts which were being made to weaken his stand in the public estimation. Still he was not aware of the extent of the intrigues that were in progress around him, in which we believe honest Putnam had no share. There was evidently a similar game going on with that which had displaced the worthy Schuyler. The surrender of Burgoyne, though mainly the result of Washington's far-seeing plans, had suddenly trumped up Gates into a quasi rival.

A letter written to Gates at the time, and still existing among his papers, lays open the spirit of the cabal. It is without signature, but in the handwriting of James Lovell, member of Congress from Massachusetts; the same who had supported Gates in opposition to Schuyler. The following are extracts: "You have saved our Northern Hemisphere; and in spite of consummate and repeated blundering, you have changed the condition of the Southern campaign, on the part of the enemy, from offensive to defensive. . . . The campaign here must soon close; if our troops are obliged to retire to Lancaster, Reading, Bethlehem, etc., for winter-quarters, and the country below is laid open to the enemy's flying parties, great and very general will be the murmur—so great, so general, that nothing inferior to a commander-in-chief will be able to resist the mighty torrent of public clamor and public vengeance.

"We have had a noble army melted down by ill-judged marches—marches that disgrace the authors and directors, and which have occasioned the severest and most just sarcasm and contempt of our enemies.

"How much are you to be envied, my dear general! How different your conduct and your fortune!

"A letter from Colonel Mifflin, received at the writing of the last paragraph, gives me the disagreeable intelligence of the loss of our fort on the Delaware. You must know the consequences—loss of the river, boats, galleys, ships of war, etc.; good winter-quarters to the enemy, and a general retreat, or ill-judged, blind attempt on our part to save a gone character.

"Conway, Spotswood, Connor, Ross, and Mifflin resigned, and many other brave and good officers are preparing their letters to Congress on the same subject. In short, this army will be totally lost, unless you come down and collect the virtuous band who wish to fight under your banner and with their aid save the Southern Hemisphere. Prepare yourself for a jaunt to this place—Congress must send for you." *

Under such baleful supervision, of which, as we have observed, he was partly conscious, but not to its full extent, Washington was obliged to carry on a losing game, in which the very elements seemed to conspire against him.

In the meantime, Sir William Howe was following up the reduction of Fort Mifflin by an expedition against Fort Mercer, which still impeded the navigation of the Delaware. On the 17th of November, Lord Cornwallis was detached with two thousand men to cross from Chester into the Jerseys, where he would be joined by a force advancing from New York.

* *Gates' Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc. Lib.

Apprised of this movement, Washington detached General Huntington, with a brigade, to join Varnum at Red Bank. General Greene was also ordered to repair thither with his division, and an express was sent off to General Glover, who was on his way through the Jerseys with his brigade, directing him to file off to the left towards the same point. These troops, with such militia as could be collected, Washington hoped would be sufficient to save the fort. Before they could form a junction, however, and reach their destination, Cornwallis appeared before it. A defense against such superior force was hopeless. The works were abandoned; they were taken possession of by the enemy, who proceeded to destroy them. After the destruction had been accomplished, the reinforcements from the North, so long and so anxiously expected, and so shamefully delayed, made their appearance. "Had they arrived but ten days sooner," writes Washington to his brother, "it would, I think, have put it in my power to save Fort Mifflin, which defended the chevaux-de-frise, and consequently have rendered Philadelphia a very ineligible situation for the enemy this winter."

The troops arrived in ragged plight, owing to the derangements of the commissariat. A part of Morgan's rifle corps was absolutely unable to take the field for want of shoes, and such was the prevalent want in this particular, that ten dollars reward was offered in general orders for a model of the best substitute for shoes that could be made out of raw hides.

The evil which Washington had so anxiously striven to prevent had now been effected. The American vessels stationed in the river had lost all protection. Some of the galleys escaped past the batteries of Philadelphia in a fog, and took refuge in the upper part of the Delaware; the rest were set on fire by their crews and abandoned.

The enemy were now in possession of the river, but it was too late in the season to clear away the obstructions, and open a passage for the large ships. All that could be effected at present, was to open a sufficient channel for transports and vessels of easy burden, to bring provisions and supplies for the army.

Washington advised the navy board, now that the enemy had command of the river, to have all the American frigates scuttled and sunk immediately. The board objected to sinking them, but said they should be ballasted and plugged, ready to be sunk in case of attack. Washington warned them that an attack would be sudden, so as to get possession of them before they could be sunk or destroyed; his advice and warning were unheeded; the consequences will hereafter be shown.

CHAPTER XLII.

QUESTION OF AN ATTACK ON PHILADELPHIA.—GENERAL REED AT HEAD-QUARTERS.—ENEMY'S WORKS RECONNOITERED.—OPINIONS IN A COUNCIL OF WAR.—EXPLOIT OF LAFAYETTE.—RECEIVES COMMAND OF A DIVISION.—MODIFICATION OF THE BOARD OF WAR.—GATES TO PRESIDE.—LETTER OF LOVELL.—SALLY FORTH OF GENERAL HOWE.—EVOLUTIONS AND SKIRMISHES.—CONWAY INSPECTOR-GENERAL.—CONSULTATION ABOUT WINTER-QUARTERS.—DREARY MARCH TO VALLEY FORGE.—HUTTING.—WASHINGTON'S VINDICATORY LETTERS.—RETROSPECT OF THE YEAR.

ON the evening of the 24th of November Washington reconnoitered, carefully and thoughtfully, the lines and defenses about Philadelphia, from the opposite side of the Schuylkill. His army was now considerably reinforced; the garrison was weakened by the absence of a large body of troops under Lord Cornwallis in the Jerseys. Some of the general officers thought this an advantageous moment for an attack upon the city. Such was the opinion of Lord Stirling, and especially General Wayne, Mad Anthony, as he was familiarly called, always eager for some daring enterprise. The recent victory at Saratoga had dazzled the public mind, and produced a general impatience for something equally striking and effective in this quarter. Reed, Washington's former secretary, now a brigadier-general, shared largely in this feeling. He had written a letter to Gates, congratulating him on having "reduced his proud and insolent enemy to the necessity of laying his arms at his feet;" assuring him that it would "enroll his name with the happy few who shine in history, not as conquerors, but as distinguished generals. I have for sometime," adds he, "volunteered with this army, which, notwithstanding the labors and efforts of its amiable chief, has yet gathered no laurels."*

Reed was actually at head-quarters as a volunteer, again enjoying much of Washington's confidence, and anxious that he should do something to meet the public wishes. Washington was aware of this prevalent feeling, and that it was much wrought on by the intrigues of designing men, and by the sarcasms of the press. He was now reconnoitering the enemy's

* Reed to Gates. *Gates' Papers.*

works to judge of the policy of the proposed attack. "A vigorous exertion is under consideration," writes Reed; "God grant it may be successful!"*

Everything in the neighborhood of the enemy's lines bore traces of the desolating hand of war. Several houses, owned probably by noted patriots, had been demolished; others burnt. Villas stood roofless; their doors and windows, and all the wood-work, had been carried off to make huts for the artillery. Nothing but bare walls remained. Gardens had been trampled down and destroyed; not a fence nor fruit-tree was to be seen. The gathering gloom of a November evening heightened the sadness of this desolation.

With an anxious eye Washington scrutinized the enemy's works. They appeared to be exceedingly strong. A chain of redoubts extended along the most commanding ground from the Schuylkill to the Delaware. They were framed, planked, and of great thickness, and were surrounded by a deep ditch, inclosed and fraised. The intervals were filled with an abatis, in constructing which all the apple-trees of the neighborhood, besides forest trees, had been sacrificed.†

The idea of Lord Stirling and those in favor of an attack, was, that it should be at different points at daylight; the main body to attack the lines to the north of the city, while Greene, embarking his men in boats at Dunk's Ferry, and passing down the Delaware, and Potter, with a body of Continentals and militia, moving down the west side of the Schuylkill, should attack the eastern and western fronts.

Washington saw that there was an opportunity for a brilliant blow, that might satisfy the impatience of the public, and silence the sarcasms of the press; but he saw that it must be struck at the expense of a fearful loss of life.

Returning to camp, he held a council of war of his principal officers, in which the matter was debated at great length and with some warmth; but without coming to a decision. At breaking up, Washington requested that each member of the council would give his opinion the next morning in writing, and he sent off a messenger in the night for the written opinion of General Greene.

Only four members of the council, Stirling, Wayne, Scott, and Woodford, were in favor of an attack; of which Lord Stirling drew up the plan. Eleven (including Greene) were against it, objecting, among other things, that the enemy's lines were too strong and too well supported, and their force too numerous,

* Reed to President Wharton.

† *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i. p. 341.

well disciplined and experienced, to be assailed without great loss and the hazard of a failure.

Had Washington been actuated by mere personal ambition and a passion for military fame, or had he yielded to the goadings of faction and the press, he might have disregarded the loss and hazarded the failure; but his patriotism was superior to his ambition; he shrank from a glory that must be achieved at such a cost, and the idea of an attack was abandoned.

General Reed, in a letter to Thomas Wharton, president of Pennsylvania, endeavors to prevent the caviling of that functionary and his co-legislators, who though they had rendered very slender assistance in the campaign, were extremely urgent for some striking achievement. "From my own feelings," writes he "I can easily judge of yours and the gentlemen round at the seeming inactivity of this army for so long a time. I know it is peculiarly irksome to the general, whose own judgment led to more vigorous measures; but there has been so great a majority of his officers opposed to every enterprising plan, as fully justifies his conduct." At the same time Reed confesses that he himself concurs with the great majority, who deemed an attack upon Philadelphia too hazardous.

A letter from General Greene received about this time, gave Washington most gratifying intelligence about his youthful friend, the Marquis de Lafayette. Though not quite recovered from the wound received at the battle of Brandywine, he had accompanied General Greene as a volunteer in his expedition into the Jerseys, and had been indulged by him with an opportunity of gratifying his belligerent humor, in a brush with Cornwallis' outposts. "The marquis," writes Greene, "with about four hundred militia and the rifle corps, attacked the enemy's picket last evening, killed about twenty, wounded many more, and took about twenty prisoners. The marquis is charmed with the spirited behavior of the militia and rifle corps; they drove the enemy about half a mile, and kept the ground until dark. The enemy's picket consisted of about three hundred, and were reinforced during the skirmish. The marquis is determined to be in the way of danger." *

Lafayette himself, at the request of Greene, wrote an animated, yet modest account of the affair to Washington. "I wish," observes he, "that this little success of ours may please you; though a very trifling one, I find it very interesting on account of the behavior of our soldiers." †

* *Washington's Writings*. Sparks, vol. v. p. 171.

† *Memoirs of Lafayette*, vol. i. p. 122.

Washington had repeatedly written to Congress in favor of giving the marquis a command equal to his nominal rank, in consideration of his illustrious and important connections, the attachment he manifested to the cause, and the discretion and good sense he had displayed on various occasions. "I am convinced," said he, "he possesses a large share of that military ardor which generally characterizes the nobility of his country."

Washington availed himself of the present occasion to support his former recommendations, by transmitting to Congress an account of Lafayette's youthful exploit. He received, in return, an intimation from that body, that it was their pleasure he should appoint the marquis to the command of a division in the Continental Army. The division of General Stephen at this time was vacant; that veteran officer, who had formerly won honor for himself in the French war, having been dismissed for misconduct at the battle of Germantown, the result of intemperate habits, into which he unfortunately had fallen. Lafayette was forthwith appointed to the command of that division.

At this juncture (November 27th) a modification took place in the Board of War, indicative of the influence which was operating in Congress. It was increased from three to five members: General Mifflin, Joseph Trumbull, Richard Peters, Colonel Pickering, and last, though certainly not least, General Gates. Mifflin's resignation of the commission of quartermaster-general had recently been accepted; but that of major-general was continued to him, though without pay. General Gates was appointed president of the board, and the President of Congress was instructed to express to him, in communicating the intelligence, the high sense which that body entertained of his abilities, and peculiar fitness to discharge the duties of that important office, upon the right execution of which the success of the American cause so eminently depended; and to inform him it was their intention to continue his rank as major-general, and that he might officiate at the board or in the field, as occasion might require; furthermore, that he should repair to Congress with all convenient despatch, to enter upon the duties of his appointment. It was evidently the idea of the cabal that Gates was henceforth to be the master-spirit of the war. His friend Lovell, chairman of the committee of foreign relations, writes to him on the same day to urge him on. "We want you at different places; but we want you most near Germantown. Good God! What a situation we are in; how different from what might have been justly expected! You will be aston-

ished when you know accurately what numbers have at one time and another been collected near Philadelphia, to wear out stockings, shoes, and breeches. Depend upon it, for every ten soldiers placed under the command of our Fabius, five recruits will be wanted annually during the war. The brave fellows at Fort Mifflin and Red Bank have despaired of succor, and been obliged to quit. The naval departments have fallen into circumstances of seeming disgrace. Come to the Board of War, if only for a short season. . . . If it was not for the defeat of Burgoyne, and the strong appearance of a European war, our affairs are Fabiused into a very disagreeable posture.”*

While busy faction was thus at work, both in and out of Congress, to undermine the fame and authority of Washington, General Howe, according to his own threats, was preparing to “drive him beyond the mountains.”

On the 4th of December, Captain Allen McLane, a vigilant officer already mentioned of the Maryland line, brought word to head-quarters, that an attack was to be made that very night on the camp at White Marsh. Washington made his dispositions to receive the meditated assault, and, in the meantime, detached McLane with one hundred men to reconnoiter. The latter met the van of the enemy about eleven o'clock at night, on the Germantown road; attacked it at the Three Mile Run, forced it to change its line of march, and hovered about and impeded it throughout the night. About three o'clock in the morning the alarm-gun announced the approach of the enemy. They appeared at daybreak, and encamped on Chestnut Hill, within three miles of Washington's right wing. Brigadier-general James Irvin, with six hundred of the Pennsylvania militia, was sent out to skirmish with their light advanced parties. He encountered them at the foot of the hill, but after a short conflict, in which several were killed and wounded, his troops gave way and fled in all directions, leaving him and four or five of his men wounded on the field, who were taken prisoners.

General Howe passed the day in reconnoitering, and at night changed his ground, and moved to a hill on the left, and within a mile of the American line. It was his wish to have a general action, but to have it on advantageous terms. He had scrutinized Washington's position and pronounced it inaccessible. For three days he manœuvred to draw him from it, shifting his own position occasionally, but still keeping on advantageous ground. Washington was not to be decoyed. He knew the vast advantages which superior science, discipline, and experi-

* Gates' *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc. Lib.

ience, gave the enemy in open field fight, and remained within his lines. All his best officers approved of his policy. Several sharp skirmishes occurred at Edge Hill and elsewhere, in which Morgan's riflemen and the Maryland militia were concerned. There was loss on both sides, but the Americans gave way before a great superiority of numbers.

In one of these skirmishes General Reed had a narrow escape. He was reconnoitering the enemy at Washington's request, when he fell in with some of the Pennsylvania militia who had been scattered, and endeavored to rally and lead them forward. His horse was shot through the head, and came with him to the ground; the enemy's flankers were running to bayonet him, as he was recovering from his fall, when Captain Allen McLane came up with his men in time to drive them off and rescue him. He was conveyed from the field by a light horseman.*

On the 7th there was every appearance that Howe meditated an attack on the left wing. Washington's heart now beat high, and he prepared for a warm and decisive action. In the course of the day he rode through every brigade, giving directions how the attack was to be met, and exhorting his troops to depend mainly on the bayonet. His men were inspirited by his words, but still more by his looks, so calm and determined; for the soldier regards the demeanor more than the words of his general in the hour of peril.

The day wore away with nothing but skirmishes, in which Morgan's riflemen, and the Maryland militia under Colonel Gist, rendered good service. An attack was expected in the night, or early in the morning; but no attack took place. The spirit manifested by the Americans in their recent contests, had rendered the British commanders cautious.

The next day, in the afternoon, the enemy were again in motion; but instead of advancing, filed off to the left, halted, and lit up a long string of fires on the heights; behind which they retreated, silently and precipitately, in the night. By the time Washington received intelligence of their movement, they were in full march by two or three routes for Philadelphia. He immediately detached light parties to fall upon their rear, but they were too far on the way for any but light horse to overtake them.

An intelligent observer writes to President Wharton from the camp: "As all their movements, added to their repeated declarations of driving General Washington over the Blue Mountains, were calculated to assure us of their having come

* *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i. p. 351.

out with the determination to fight, it was thought prudent to keep our post upon the hills, near the church. I understand it was resolved, if they did not begin the attack soon, to have fought them at all events, it not being supposed that they could, consistent with their own feelings, have secretly stolen into the city so suddenly after so long gasconading on what they intended to do." *

Here then was another occasion of which the enemies of Washington availed themselves to deride his cautious policy. Yet it was clearly dictated by true wisdom. His heart yearned for a general encounter with the enemy. In his despatch to the President of Congress, he writes, "I sincerely wish that they had made an attack; as the issue, in all probability, from the disposition of our troops and the strong situation of our camp, would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time I must add, that reason, prudence, and every principle of policy forbade us from quitting our post to attack them. Nothing but success would have justified the measure; and this could not be expected from their position."

At this time, one of the earliest measures recommended by the Board of War, and adopted by Congress, showed the increasing influence of the cabal; two inspectors general were to be appointed for the promotion of discipline and reformation of abuses in the army; and one of the persons chosen for this important office was Conway, with the rank, too, of major-general! This was tacitly in defiance of the opinion so fully expressed by Washington of the demerits of the man, and the ruinous effects to be apprehended from his promotion over the heads of brigadiers of superior claims. Conway, however, was the secret colleague of Gates, and Gates was now the rising sun.

Winter had now set in with all its severity. The troops, worn down by long and hard service, had need of repose. Poorly clad, also, and almost destitute of blankets, they required a warmer shelter than mere tents against the inclemencies of the season. The nearest towns which would afford winter-quarters, were Lancaster, York, and Carlisle; but should the army retire to any one of these, a large and fertile district would be exposed to be foraged by the foe, and its inhabitants, perhaps, to be dragooned into submission.

Much anxiety was felt by the Pennsylvania Legislature on the subject, who were desirous that the army should remain in the field. General Reed, in a letter to the president of that

* Letter of Elias Boudinot, Commissary of Prisoners, to President Wharton. *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i. p. 351.

body, writes : " A line of winter-quarters had been proposed and supported by some of his (Washington's) principal officers ; but I believe I may assure you he will not come into it, but take post as near the enemy, and cover as much of the country as the nakedness and wretched condition of some part of the army will admit. To keep the field entirely is impracticable, and so you would think if you saw the plight we were in. You will soon know the plan, and as it has been adopted principally upon the opinions of the gentlemen of this State, I hope it will give satisfaction to you and the gentlemen around you. If it is not doing what we would, it is doing what we can ; and I must say the general has shown a truly feeling and patriotic respect for us on this occasion, in which you would agree with me, if you knew all the circumstances."

The plan adopted by Washington, after holding a council of war, and weighing the discordant opinions of his officers, was to hut the army for the winter at Valley Forge, in Chester County, on the west side of the Schuylkill, about twenty miles from Philadelphia. Here he would be able to keep a vigilant eye on that city, and at the same time protect a great extent of country.

Sad and dreary was the march to Valley Forge ; uncheered by the recollection of any recent triumph, as was the march to winter-quarters in the preceding year. Hungry and cold were the poor fellows who had so long been keeping the field ; for provisions were scant, clothing worn out, and so badly off were they for shoes, that the footsteps of many might be tracked in blood. Yet at this very time we are told, " hogsheads of shoes, stockings, and clothing, were lying at different places on the roads and in the woods, perishing for want of teams, or of money to pay the teamsters." *

Such were the consequences of the derangement of the commissariat.

Arrived at Valley Forge on the 17th, the troops had still to brave the wintry weather in their tents, until they could cut down trees and construct huts for their accommodation. Those who were on the sick list had to seek temporary shelter wherever it could be found, among the farmers of the neighborhood. According to the regulations in the orderly book, each hut was to be fourteen feet by sixteen, with walls of logs filled in with clay, six feet and a half high ; the fireplaces were of logs plastered ; and logs split into rude planks or slabs furnished the roofing. A hut was allotted to twelve non-commissioned officers and soldiers. A general officer had a hut to

* Gordon's *Hist. Am. War*, vol. ii p. 279.

himself. The same was allowed to the staff of each brigade and regiment, and the field-officer of each regiment; and a hut to the commissioned officers of each company. The huts of the soldiery fronted on streets. Those of the officers formed a line in the rear, and the encampment gradually assumed the look of a rude military village.

Scarce had the troops been two days employed in these labors, when, before daybreak on the 22d, word was brought that a body of the enemy had made a sortie toward Chester, apparently on a foraging expedition. Washington issued orders to Generals Huntington and Varnum to hold their troops in readiness to march against them. Their replies bespeak the forlorn state of the army. "Fighting will be far preferable to starving," writes Huntington. "My brigade are out of provisions, nor can the commissary obtain any meat. I have used every argument my imagination can invent to make the soldiers easy, but I despair of being able to do it much longer."

"It's a very pleasing circumstance to the division under my command," writes Varnum, "that there is a probability of their marching; three days successively we have been destitute of bread. Two days we have been entirely without meat. The men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded."

In fact, a dangerous mutiny had broken out among the famishing troops in the preceding night, which their officers had had great difficulty in quelling.

Washington instantly wrote to the President of Congress on the subject. "I do not know from what cause this alarming deficiency or rather total failure of supplies arises; but unless more vigorous exertions and better regulations take place in that line (the commissaries' department) immediately, the army must dissolve. I have done all in my power by remonstrating, by writing, by ordering the commissaries on this head, from time to time; but without any good effect, or obtaining more than a present scanty relief. Owing to this, the march of the army has been delayed on more than one interesting occasion, in the course of the present campaign; and had a body of the enemy crossed the Schuylkill this morning, as I had reason to expect, the divisions which I ordered to be in readiness to march and meet them could not have moved."

Scarce had Washington despatched this letter, when he learnt that the Legislature of Pennsylvania had addressed a remonstrance to Congress against his going into winter-quarters, instead of keeping in the open field. This letter, received in his forlorn situation, surrounded by an unhoused, scantily clad, half-starved army shivering in the midst of December's snow

and cold, put an end to his forbearance, and drew from him another letter to the President of Congress, dated on the 23d, which we shall largely quote ; not only for its manly and truthful eloquence, but for the exposition it gives of the difficulties of his situation, mainly caused by unwise and intermeddling legislation.

And first as to the commissariat :—

“Though I have been tender, heretofore,” writes he, “of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted ; yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar, but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have by every department of the army.

“Since the month of July, we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general ; and to want of assistance from this department, the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that notwithstanding it is a standing order, and often repeated, that the troops shall always have two days’ provisions by them, that they might be ready at any sudden call ; yet an opportunity has scarcely ever offered of taking an advantage of the enemy, that it has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded on this account. As a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, as a further proof of the inability of an army, under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers’ houses on the same account), we have, by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men, now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot, and otherwise naked. By the same return, it appears that our whole strength in continental troops, including the Eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty ; notwithstanding which, and that since the 4th instant, our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers have been obliged, and still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way), have decreased near two thousand men.

“We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter-quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine could warrant the remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I described ours to be—which are by no means exaggerated—to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed and provided for a winter’s campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye, is, that these very gentlemen, who were well apprised of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve in Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days, agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand), should think a winter’s campaign, and the covering of those States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier, and less distressing thing, to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel abundantly for them, and, from my soul, I pity those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve nor prevent.

“It is for these reasons, therefore, that I have dwelt upon the subject; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress, to find that much more is expected from me than is possible to be performed, and that, upon the ground of safety and policy, I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny.”

In the present exigency, to save his camp from desolation, and to relieve his starving soldiery, he was compelled to exercise the authority recently given him by Congress, to forage the country round, seize supplies wherever he could find them, and pay for them in money or in certificates redeemable by Congress. He exercised these powers with great reluctance; rurally inclined himself, he had a strong sympathy with the cultivators of the soil, and ever regarded the yeomanry with a paternal eye.

He was apprehensive, moreover, of irritating the jealousy of military sway, prevalent throughout the country, and of corrupting the morals of the army. "Such procedures," writes he to the President of Congress, "may give a momentary relief; but if repeated, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Beside spreading disaffection, jealousy, and fear among the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran troops, under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, to plunder and robbery, difficult to suppress afterward, and which has proved not only ruinous to the inhabitants, but in many instances to armies themselves. I regret the occasion that compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it the greatest of our misfortunes if we should be under the necessity of practicing it again."

How truly, in all these trying scenes of his military career, does the patriot rise above the soldier!

With these noble and high-spirited appeals to Congress, we close Washington's operations for 1777; one of the most arduous and eventful years of his military life, and one of the most trying to his character and fortunes. He began it with an empty army chest, and a force dwindled down to four thousand half-disciplined men. Throughout the year he had had to contend, not merely with the enemy, but with the parsimony and meddlesome interference of Congress. In his most critical times that body had left him without funds and without reinforcements. It had made some promotions contrary to his advice, and contrary to military usage, thereby wronging and disgusting some of his bravest officers. It had changed the commissariat in the very midst of a campaign, and thereby thrown the whole service into confusion.

Among so many cross-purposes and discouragements, it was a difficult task for Washington to "keep the life and soul of the army together." Yet he had done so. Marvelous indeed was the manner in which he had soothed the discontents of his aggrieved officers, and reconciled them to an ill-requiting service; and still more marvelous the manner in which he had breathed his own spirit of patience and perseverance in his yeoman soldiery, during their sultry marchings and counter-marchings through the Jerseys, under all kinds of privations, with no visible object of pursuit to stimulate their ardor, hunting, as it were, the rumored apparitions of an unseen fleet.

All this time, too, while endeavoring to ascertain and counteract the operations of Lord Howe upon the ocean, and his brother upon the land, he was directing and aiding military measures against Burgoyne in the North. Three games were

in a manner going on under his supervision. The operations of the commander-in-chief are not always most obvious to the public eye; victories may be planned in his tent, of which subordinate generals get the credit; and most of the moves which ended in giving a triumphant check to Burgoyne, may be traced to Washington's shifting camp in the Jerseys.

It has been an irksome task in some of the preceding chapters, to notice the under-current of intrigue and management by which some part of this year's campaign was disgraced; yet even-handed justice requires that such machinations should be exposed. We have shown how successful they were in displacing the noble-hearted Schuyler from the head of the Northern department; the same machinations were now at work to undermine the commander-in-chief, and elevate the putative hero of Saratoga on his ruins. He was painfully aware of them; yet in no part of the war did he more thoroughly evince that magnanimity which was his grand characteristic, than in the last scenes of this campaign, where he rose above the tauntings of the press, the sneerings of the cabal, the murmurs of the public, the suggestions of some of his friends, and the throbbing impulses of his own courageous heart, and adhered to that Fabian policy which he considered essential to the safety of the cause. To dare is often the impulse of selfish ambition or hare-brained valor: to forbear is at times the proof of real greatness.

CHAPTER XLIII.

GATES IN THE ASCENDANT.—THE CONWAY LETTER.—SUSPICIONS.—CONSEQUENT CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GATES AND WASHINGTON.—WARNING LETTER FROM DR. CRAIK.—ANONYMOUS LETTERS.—PROJECTED EXPEDITION TO CANADA.—LAFAYETTE, GATES, AND THE BOARD OF WAR.

WHILE censure and detraction had thus dogged Washington throughout his harassing campaign, and followed him to his forlorn encampment at Valley Forge, Gates was the constant theme of popular eulogium, and was held up by the cabal, as the only one capable of retrieving the desperate fortunes of the South. Letters from his friends in Congress urged him to hasten on, take his seat at the head of the Board of War, assume the management of military affairs, and *save the country!*

Gates was not a strong-minded man. Is it a wonder, then, that his brain should be bewildered by the fumes of incense offered up on every side? In the midst of his triumph, however, while feasting on the sweets of adulation came the withering handwriting on the wall! It is an epistle from his friend Mifflin. "My dear General," writes he, "an extract from Conway's letter to you has been procured and sent to head-quarters. The extract was a collection of just sentiments, yet such as should not have been intrusted to any of your family. General Washington inclosed it to Conway without remarks. . . . My dear General, take care of your sincerity and frank disposition; they cannot injure yourself, but may injure some of your best friends. Affectionately yours."

Nothing could surpass the trouble and confusion of mind of Gates on the perusal of this letter. Part of his correspondence with Conway had been sent to head-quarters. But what part? What was the purport and extent of the alleged extracts? How had they been obtained? Who had sent them? Mifflin's letter specified nothing; and this silence as to particulars, left an unbounded field for tormenting conjecture. In fact, Mifflin knew nothing in particular when he wrote; nor did any of the cabal. The laconic nature of Washington's note to Conway had thrown them all in confusion. None knew the extent of the correspondence discovered, nor how far they might be individually compromised.

Gates, in his perplexity, suspected that his portfolio had been stealthily opened and his letters copied. But which of them?—and by whom? He wrote to Conway and Mifflin, anxiously inquiring what part of their correspondence had been thus surreptitiously obtained, and "who was the villain who had played him this treacherous trick. There is scarcely a man living," says he, "who takes a greater care of his letters than I do." I never fail to lock them up, and keep the key in my pocket. . . . No punishment is too severe for the wretch who betrayed me; and I doubt not your friendship for me, as well as your zeal for our safety, will bring the name of this miscreant to light." *

Gates made rigid inquiries among the gentlemen of his staff; all disavowed any knowledge of the matter. In the confusion and perturbation of his mind, his suspicions glanced, or were turned, upon Colonel Hamilton, as the channel of communication, he having had free access to head-quarters during his late

mission from the commander-in-chief. In this state of mental trepidation, Gates wrote, on the 8th of December, the following letter to Washington:

"SIR,—I shall not attempt to describe what, as a private gentleman, I cannot help feeling, on representing to my mind the disagreeable situation in which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent; but, as a public officer, I conjure your Excellency to give me all the assistance you can in tracing the author of the infidelity which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands. Those letters have been stealthily copied, but which of them, when, and by whom, is to me as yet an unfathomable secret. . . . It is, I believe, in your Excellency's power to do me and the United States a very important service, by detecting a wretch who may betray me, and capitally injure the very operations under your immediate directions. . . . The crime being eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences, and it being unknown to me whether the letter came to you from a member of Congress, or from an officer, I shall have the honor of transmitting a copy of this to the president, that the Congress may, in concert with your Excellency, obtain as soon as possible a discovery which so deeply affects the safety of the States. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished." A copy of this letter was transmitted by Gates to the President of Congress.

Washington replied with characteristic dignity and candor. "Your letter of the 8th ultimo," writes he (January 4th), "came to my hand a few days ago, and to my great surprise, informed me that a copy of it had been sent to Congress, for what reason I find myself unable to account; but, as some end was doubtless intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honorable body should harbor an unfavorable suspicion of my having practiced some indirect means to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

"I am to inform you, then, that Colonel Wilkinson, on his way to Congress, in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading, and, not in confidence, that I ever understood, informed his aide-de-camp, Major McWilliams, that General Conway had written this to you: 'Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counselors would have ruined it.' Lord Stirling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account, with this remark, 'The in-

closed was communicated by Colonel Wilkinson to Major McWilliams. Such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect.' ”

Washington adds, that the letter written by him to Conway was merely to show that gentleman that he was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition. “Neither this letter,” continues he, “nor the information which occasioned it, was ever directly or indirectly communicated by me to a single officer in this army, out of my own family, excepting the Marquis de Lafayette, who, having been spoken to on the subject by General Conway, applied for and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained Wilkinson’s information; so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could, in its consequences, give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.”

. . . . “Till Lord Stirling’s letter came to my hands, I never knew that General Conway, whom I viewed in the light of a stranger to you, was a correspondent of yours: much less did I suspect that I was the subject of your confidential letters. Pardon me, then, for adding, that so far from conceiving the safety of the States can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured, by a discovery of this kind, or that I should be called upon in such solemn terms to point out the author, I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given to forewarn, and consequently to forearm me, against a secret enemy, or in other words, a dangerous incendiary; in which character, sooner or later, this country will know General Conway. But in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken.”

This clear and ample answer explained the enigma of the laconic note to Conway, and showed that the betrayal of the defamatory correspondence was due to the babbling of Wilkinson. Following the mode adopted by Gates, Washington transmitted his reply through the hands of the President of Congress, and thus this matter, which he had generously kept secret, became blazoned before Congress and the world.

A few days after writing the above letter, Washington received the following warning from his old and faithful friend, Dr. Craik, dated from Maryland, January 6th. “Notwithstanding your unwearied diligence and unparalleled sacrifice of domestic happiness and ease of mind which you have made for the good of your country, yet you are not wanting in secret enemies, who would rob you of the great and truly deserved esteem your country has for you. Base and villainous men, through chagrin, envy, or ambition, are endeavoring to lessen you in the minds of the people, and taking underhand methods

to traduce your character. The morning I left camp, I was informed that a strong faction was forming against you in the new Board of War, and in the Congress. . . . The method they are taking is by holding General Gates up to the people, and making them believe that you have had a number three or four times greater than the enemy, and have done nothing; that Philadelphia was given up by your management, and that you have had many opportunities of defeating the enemy. It is said they dare not appear openly as your enemies; but that the new Board of War is composed of such leading men, as will throw such obstacles and difficulties in your way as to force you to resign." *

An anonymous letter to Patrick Henry, dated from Yorktown, January 12th, says among other things, "We have only passed the Red Sea; a dreary wilderness is still before us, and unless a Moses or a Joshua are raised up in our behalf, we must perish before we reach the promised land. . . . But is our case desperate? By no means. We have wisdom, virtue and strength enough to save us if they could be called into action. The northern army has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a general at their head. The spirit of the southern army is in no way inferior to the spirit of the northern. A Gates, a Lee, or a Conway, would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men.

"The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector-general of our army, in order to reform abuses; but the remedy is only a palliative one. In one of his letters to a friend, he says, 'a great and good God hath decreed America to be free, or the [general] and weak counselors would have ruined her long ago.'" †

Another anonymous paper, probably by the same hand, dated January 17th, and sent to Congress, under a cover directed to the president, Mr. Laurens, decried all the proceedings of the southern army, declaring that the proper method of attacking, beating, and conquering the enemy, had never as yet been adopted by the commander-in-chief; that the late success to the northward was owing to a change of the commanders; that the southern army would have been alike successful had a similar change taken place. After dwelling on the evils and derangements prevalent in every department, it draws the conclusion, "That the head cannot possibly be sound, when the whole body is disordered; that the people of

* Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, vol. v. p. 493.

† *Ibid.*

America have been guilty of idolatry, by making a man their God, and the God of heaven and earth will convince them by woful experience, that he is only a man ; that no good may be expected from the standing army until Baal and his worshippers are banished from the camp.*

Instead of laying this mischievous paper before Congress, Mr. Laurens remitted it to Washington. He received the following reply: "I cannot sufficiently express the obligations I feel to you for your friendship and politeness, upon an occasion in which I am so deeply interested. I was not unapprised that a malignant faction had been for some time forming to my prejudice ; which, conscious as I am of having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trust reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account. But my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous consequences which intestine dissensions may produce to the common cause.

"My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defense I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station ? Merit and talent, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalry, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me, that it has ever been my unremitted aim to do the best that circumstances would permit ; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error."

Gates was disposed to mark his advent to power by a striking operation. A notable project had been concerted by him and the Board of War for a winter irruption into Canada. An expedition was to proceed from Albany, cross Lake Champlain on the ice, burn the British shipping at St. John's and press forward to Montreal. Washington was not consulted in the matter : the project was submitted to Congress, and sanctioned by them without his privity.

One object of the scheme was to detach the Marquis de Lafayette from Washington, to whom he was devotedly attached, and bring him into the interests of the cabal. For this purpose he was to have the command of the expedition, an appointment which it was thought would tempt his military ambition. Conway was to be second in command, and it was trusted that

* Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, vol. v. p. 497.

his address and superior intelligence would virtually make him the leader.

The first notice that Washington received of the project was in a letter from Gates, inclosing one to Lafayette, informing the latter of his appointment, and requiring his attendance at Yorktown to receive his instructions.

Gates, in his letter to Washington, asked his opinion and advice, evidently as a matter of form. The latter expressed himself obliged by the "polite request," but observed that, as he neither knew the extent of the objects in view, nor the means to be employed to effect them, it was not in his power to pass any judgment upon the subject. He wished success to the enterprise, "both as it might advance the public good and confer personal honor on the Marquis de Lafayette, for whom he had a very particular esteem and regard."

The cabal, however, had overshot their mark. Lafayette, who was aware of their intrigues, was so disgusted by the want of deference and respect to the commander-in-chief evinced in the whole proceeding, that he would at once have declined the appointment, had not Washington himself advised him strongly to accept it.

He accordingly proceeded to Yorktown, where Gates already had his little court of schemers and hangers on. Lafayette found him at a table, presiding with great hilarity, for he was social in his habits, and in the flush of recent success. The young marquis had a cordial welcome to his board, which in its buoyant conviviality contrasted with the sober decencies of that of the thoughtful commander-in-chief, in his dreary encampment at Valley Forge. Gates, in his excitement, was profuse of promises. Everything was to be made smooth and easy for Lafayette. He was to have at least two thousand five hundred fighting men under him. Stark, the veteran Stark, was ready to coöperate with a body of Green Mountain boys. "Indeed," cries Gates, chuckling, "General Stark will have burnt the fleet before your arrival!"

It was near the end of the repast. The wine had circulated freely, and toasts had been given according to the custom of the day. The marquis thought it time to show his flag. One toast, he observed, had been omitted, which he would now propose. Glasses were accordingly filled, and he gave, "The commander-in-chief of the American armies." The toast was received without cheering.

Lafayette was faithful to the flag he had unfurled. In accepting the command, he considered himself detached from the main army and under the immediate orders of the commander-

in-chief. He had a favorable opinion of the military talents of Conway, but he was aware of the game he was playing; he made a point, therefore, of having the Baron de Kalb appointed to the expedition, whose commission being of older date than that of Conway, would give him the precedence of that officer, and make him second in command. This was reluctantly ceded by the cabal, who found themselves baffled by the loyalty in friendship of the youthful soldier.

Lafayette set out for Albany without any very sanguine expectations. Writing to Washington from Flemington, amid the difficulties of winter travel, he says: "I go on very slowly, sometimes drenched by rain, sometimes covered with snow, and not entertaining many handsome thoughts about the projected incursion into Canada. Lake Champlain is too cold for producing the least bit of laurel, and, if I am not starved, I shall be as proud as if I had gained three battles."*

CHAPTER XLIV.

GATES UNDERTAKES TO EXPLAIN THE CONWAY CORRESPONDENCE.—WASHINGTON'S SEARCHING ANALYSIS OF THE EXPLANATION.—CLOSE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE.—SPURIOUS LETTERS PUBLISHED.—LAFAYETTE AND THE CANADA EXPEDITION.—HIS PERPLEXITIES.—COUNSELS OF WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON'S letter of the 4th of January, on the subject of the Conway correspondence, had not reached General Gates until the 22d of January, after his arrival at Yorktown. No sooner did Gates learn from its context, that all Washington's knowledge of that correspondence was confined to a single paragraph of a letter, and that merely as quoted in conversation by Wilkinson, than the whole matter appeared easily to be explained or shuffled off. He accordingly took pen in hand, and addressed Washington as follows, on the 23d of January: "The letter which I had the honor to receive yesterday from your Excellency, has relieved me from unspeakable uneasiness. I now anticipate the pleasure it will give you when you discover that what has been conveyed to you for an extract of General Conway's letter to me, was not an information which friendly motives induced a man of honor to give, that injured virtue might be forearmed against secret enemies. The paragraph which your Excellency has condescended to transcribe, is spu-

* Sparks' *Cor. Am. Rev.*, vol. ii. p. 74.

rious. It was certainly fabricated to answer the most selfish and wicked purposes."

He then goes on to declare that the genuine letter of Conway was perfectly harmless, containing judicious remarks upon the want of discipline in the army, but making no mention of weak generals or bad counselors. "Particular actions rather than persons were blamed, but with impartiality, and I am convinced he did not aim at lessening, in my opinion, the merit of any person. His letter was perfectly harmless; however, now that various reports have been circulated concerning its contents, they ought not to be submitted to the solemn inspection of those who stand most high in the public esteem.

"Anxiety and jealousy would arise in the breast of very respectable officers, who, sensible of faults which inexperience and that alone, may have led them into, would be unnecessarily disgusted, if they perceived a probability of such errors being recorded.

"Honor forbids it, and patriotism demands that I should return the letter into the hands of the writer. I will do it; but, at the same time, I declare that the paragraph conveyed to your Excellency as a genuine part of it, was, in words as well as in substance, a wicked forgery.

"About the beginning of December, I was informed that letter had occasioned an explanation between your Excellency and that gentleman. Not knowing whether the whole letter or a part of it had been stealthily copied, but fearing malice had altered its original texture, I own, sir, that a dread of the mischiefs which might attend the forgery, I suspected would be made, put me some time in a most painful situation. When I communicated to the officers in my family the intelligence which I had received, they all entreated me to rescue their characters from the suspicions they justly conceived themselves liable to, until the guilty persons should be known. To facilitate the discovery, I wrote to your Excellency; but, unable to learn whether General Conway's letter had been transmitted to you by a member of Congress, or a gentleman in the army, I was afraid much time would be lost in the course of the inquiry, and that the States might receive some capital injury from the infidelity of the person who I thought had stolen a copy of the obnoxious letter. Was it not probable that the secrets of the army might be obtained and betrayed through the same means to the enemy? For this reason, sir, not doubting that Congress would most cheerfully concur with you in tracing out the criminal, I wrote to the president. and inclosed to him a copy of my letter to your Excellency.

“About the time I was forwarding those letters, Brigadier-general Wilkinson returned to Albany. I informed him of the treachery which had been committed, but I concealed from him the measures I was pursuing to unmask the author. Wilkinson answered, he was assured it never would come to light; and endeavored to fix my suspicions on Lieutenant-colonel Troup,* who he said, might have incautiously conversed on the substance of General Conway’s letter with Colonel Hamilton, whom you had sent not long before to Albany. I did not listen to this insinuation against your aide-de-camp and mine.”

In the original draft of this letter, which we have seen among the papers of General Gates, he adds, as a reason for not listening to the insinuation, that he considered it even as ungenerous. “But,” pursues he, “the light your Excellency has just assisted me with, exhibiting the many qualifications which are necessarily blended together in the head and heart of General Wilkinson, I would not omit this fact; it will enable your Excellency to judge whether or not he would scruple to make such a forgery as that which he now stands charged with, and ought to be exemplarily punished.” This, with considerable more to the same purport, intended to make Wilkinson the scape-goat, stands canceled in the draft, and was omitted in the letter sent to Washington; but by some means, fair or foul, it came to the knowledge of Wilkinson, who has published it at length in his memoirs, and who, it will be found, resented the imputation thus conveyed.

General Conway, also, in a letter to Washington (dated January 27th), informs him that the letter had been returned to him by Gates, and that he found with great satisfaction that “the paragraph so much spoken of did not exist in the said letter, nor anything like it.” He had intended, he adds, to publish the letter, but had been dissuaded by President Laurens and two or three members of Congress, to whom he had shown it, lest it should inform the enemy of a misunderstanding among the American generals. He therefore depended upon the justice, candor, and generosity of General Washington, to put a stop to the forgery.

On the 9th of February, Washington wrote Gates a long and searching reply to his letters of the 8th and 23d of January, analyzing them, and showing how, in spirit and import, they contradicted each other; and how sometimes the same letter contradicted itself. How in the first letter, the reality of the extracts was by implication allowed, and the only solicitude shown was to find out the person who brought them to

* At that time an aide-de-camp of Gates.

light; while, in the second letter, the whole was pronounced, "in word as well as in substance, a wicked forgery." "It is not my intention," observes Washington, "to contradict this assertion, but only to intimate some considerations which tend to induce a supposition, that, though none of General Conway's letters to you contained the offensive passage mentioned, there might have been something in them too nearly related to it, that could give such an extraordinary alarm. If this were not the case, how easy in the first instance to have declared there was nothing exceptionable in them, and to have produced the letters themselves in support of it? The propriety of the objection suggested against submitting them to inspection may very well be questioned. 'The various reports circulated concerning their contents,' were perhaps so many arguments for making them speak for themselves, to place the matter upon the footing of certainty. Concealment in an affair which had made so much noise, though not by *my* means, will naturally lead men to conjecture the worst, and it will be a subject of speculation even to candor itself. The anxiety and jealousy you apprehend from revealing the letter, will be very apt to be increased by suppressing it."

We forbear to follow Washington through his stern analysis, but we cannot omit the concluding paragraph of his strictures on the character of Conway.

"Notwithstanding the hopeful presages you are pleased to figure to yourself of General Conway's firm and constant friendship to America, I cannot persuade myself to retract the prediction concerning him, which you so emphatically wish had not been inserted in my last. A better acquaintance with him, than I have reason to think you have had, from what you say, and a concurrence of circumstances, oblige me to give him but little credit for the qualifications of his heart, of which, at least, I beg leave to assume the privilege of being a tolerable judge. Were it necessary, more instances than one might be adduced, from his behavior and conversation, to manifest that he is capable of all the malignity of detraction, and all the meanness of intrigue, to gratify the absurd resentment of disappointed vanity, or to answer the purposes of personal aggrandizement, and promote the interest of faction."

Gates evidently quailed beneath this letter. In his reply, February 19th, he earnestly hoped that no more of that time so precious to the public, might be lost upon the subject of General Conway's letter.

"Whether that gentleman," says he, "does or does not deserve the suspicions you express, would be entirely indifferent to

me did he not possess an office of high rank in the army of the United States. As to the gentleman, I have no personal connection with him, nor had I any correspondence previous to his writing the letter which has given offense, nor have I since written to him, save to certify what I know to be the contents of that letter. He, therefore, must be responsible; as I heartily dislike controversy even upon my own account, and much more in a matter wherein I was only accidentally concerned," etc., etc.

The following was the dignified but freezing note with which Washington closed this correspondence.

VALLEY FORGE, 24th Feb. 1778.

"Sir,—I yesterday received your favor of the 19th instant. I am as averse to controversy as any man; and had I not been forced into it, you never would have had occasion to impute to me even the shadow of a disposition towards it. Your repeatedly and solemnly disclaiming any offensive views in those matters which have been the subject of our past correspondence, makes me willing to close with the desire you express of burying them hereafter in silence, and, as far as future events will permit, oblivion. My temper leads me to peace and harmony with all men; and it is peculiarly my wish to avoid any personal feuds or dissensions with those who are embarked in the same great national interest with myself, as every difference of this kind must, in its consequences, be very injurious. I am, sir," etc.

Among the various insidious artifices resorted to about this time to injure the character of Washington, and destroy public confidence in his sincerity, was the publication of a series of letters purporting to be from him to some members of his family and to his agent, Mr. Lund Washington, which, if genuine, would prove him to be hollow-hearted and faithless to the cause he was pretending to uphold. They had appeared in England in a pamphlet form, as if printed from originals and drafts found in possession of a black servant of Washington, who had been left behind ill, at Fort Lee, when it was evacuated. They had recently been reprinted at New York in Rivington's "Royal Gazette;" the first letter making its appearance on the 14th of February. It had also been printed at New York in a handbill, and extracts published in a Philadelphia paper.

Washington took no notice of this publication at the time, but in private correspondence with his friends, he observes: 'These letters are written with a great deal of art. The intermixture of so many family circumstances (which, by the by,

want foundation in truth) gives an air of plausibility, which renders the villainy greater; as the whole is a contrivance to answer the most diabolical purposes. Who the author of them is, I know not. From information or acquaintance he must have had some knowledge of the component parts of my family; but he has most egregiously mistaken facts in several instances. The design of his labors is as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness.* And in another letter, he observes: "They were written to show that I was an enemy to independence, and with a view to create distrust and jealousy. It is no easy matter to decide whether the villainy or the artifice of these letters is greatest." †

The author of these letters was never discovered. He entirely failed in his object; the letters were known at once to be forgeries.‡

Letters received at this juncture from Lafayette, gave Washington tidings concerning the expedition against Canada, set on foot without consulting him. General Conway had arrived at Albany three days before the marquis, and his first word when they met was that the expedition was quite impossible.

* Letter to Gen. Henry Lee, Virginia.—*Sparks' Writings of Washington*, vol. v. 378.

† Letter to Landon Carter. *Idem.*, p 391.

‡ The introduction to the letters states them to have been transmitted to England by an officer serving in Delancy's corps of loyalists, who gives the following account of the way he came by them: "Among the prisoners at Fort Lee, I espied a mulatto fellow, whom I thought I recollected, and who confirmed my conjectures by gazing very earnestly at me. I asked him if he knew me. At first he was unwilling to own it; but when he was about to be carried off, thinking, I suppose, that I might perhaps be of some service to him, he came and told me that he was Billy, and the old servant of General Washington. He had been left there on account of an indisposition which prevented his attending his master. I asked him a great many questions, as you may suppose; but found very little satisfaction in his answers. At last, however, he told me that he had a small portmanteau of his master's, of which, when he found that he must be put into confinement, he entreated my care. It contained only a few stockings and shirts; and I could see nothing worth my care, except an almanac, in which he had kept a sort of a journal, or diary of his proceedings since his first coming to New York; there were also two letters from his lady, one from Mr. Custis, and some pretty long ones from a Mr. Lund Washington. And in the same bundle with them, the first draughts, or foul copies of answers to them. I read these with avidity; and being highly entertained with them, have shown them to several of my friends, who all agree with me, that he is a very different character from what they had supposed him."

In commenting on the above, Washington observed that his mulatto man Billy, had never been one moment in the power of the enemy, and that no part of his baggage nor any of his attendants were captured during the whole course of the war.—*Letter to Timothy Pickering*, Sparks, ix. 149.

Generals Schuyler, Lincoln, and Arnold, had written to Conway to that effect. The marquis at first was inclined to hope the contrary, but his hope was soon demolished. Instead of the two thousand five hundred men that had been promised him, not twelve hundred in all were to be found fit for duty, and most part of these were "naked even for a summer's campaign;" all shrank from a winter incursion into so cold a country. As to General Stark and his legion of Green Mountain Boys, who, according to the gasconade of Gates, might have burnt the fleet before Lafayette's arrival, the marquis received at Albany a letter from the veteran, "who wishes to know," says he, "*what number of men, for what time, and for what rendezvous, I desire him to raise.*"

Another officer, who was to have enlisted men, would have done so, *had he received money*. "One asks what encouragement his people will have; the other has no clothes; not one of them has received a dollar of what was due to them. I have applied to everybody, I have begged at every door I could, these two days, and I see that I could do something were the expedition to be begun in five weeks. But you know we have not an hour to lose; and, indeed, it is now rather too late had we everything in readiness."

The poor marquis was in despair; but what most distressed him was the dread of ridicule. He had written to his friends that he had the command the of expedition; it would be known throughout Europe. "I am afraid," says he, "that it will reflect on my reputation, and I shall be laughed at. My fears upon that subject are so strong, that I would choose to become again only a volunteer, unless Congress offers the means of mending this ugly business by some glorious operation."

A subsequent letter is in the same vein. The poor marquis, in his perplexity, lays his whole heart open to Washington with childlike simplicity. "I have written lately to you my distressing, ridiculous, foolish, and indeed nameless situation. I am sent, with a great noise, at the head of an army for doing great things; the whole continent, France and Europe herself, and, what is worse, the British army, are in great expectations. How far they will be deceived, how far we shall be ridiculed, you may judge by the candid account you have got of the state of our affairs.—I confess, my dear general, that I find myself of very quick feelings whenever my reputation and glory are concerned in anything. It is very hard that such a part of my happiness, without which I cannot live, should depend upon schemes which I never knew of but when there was no time to put them in execution. I assure you, my most dear and re-

spected friend, that I am more unhappy than I ever was. . . . I should be very happy if you were here, to give me some advice; but I have nobody to consult with."

Washington, with his considerate, paternal counsels, hastened to calm the perturbation of his youthful friend, and dispel those fears respecting his reputation, excited only, as he observed, "by an uncommon degree of sensibility." "It will be no disadvantage to you to have it known in Europe," writes he, "that you have received so manifest a proof of the good opinion and confidence of Congress as an important detached command. . . . However sensibly your ardor for glory may make you feel this disappointment, you may be assured that your character stands as fair as ever it did, and that no new enterprise is necessary to wipe off this imaginary stain.

The project of an irruption into Canada was at length formally suspended by a resolve of Congress; and Washington was directed to recall the marquis and the Baron de Kalb, the presence of the latter being deemed absolutely necessary to the army at Valley Forge. Lafayette at the same time received assurance of the high sense entertained by Congress of his prudence, activity, and zeal, and that nothing was wanting on his part to give the expedition the utmost possible effect.

Gladly the young marquis hastened back to Valley Forge, to enjoy the companionship and find himself once more under the paternal eye of Washington, leaving Conway for the time in command at Albany, "where there would be nothing, perhaps, to be attended to but some disputes of Indians and Tories."

Washington, in a letter to General Armstrong, writes. I shall say no more of the Canada expedition than that it is at an end. I never was made acquainted with a single circumstance relating to it." *

* Sparks' *Writings of Washington*, vol. v. p. 300.

CHAPTER XLV.

MORE TROUBLE ABOUT THE CONWAY LETTER.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LORD STIRLING AND WILKINSON.—WILKINSON'S HONOR WOUNDED.—HIS PASSAGE AT ARMS WITH GENERAL GATES.—HIS SEAT AT THE BOARD OF WAR UNCOMFORTABLE.—DETERMINES THAT LORD STIRLING SHALL BLEED.—HIS WOUNDED HONOR HEALED.—HIS INTERVIEW WITH WASHINGTON.—SEES THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GATES.—DENOUNCES GATES AND GIVES UP THE SECRETARYSHIP.—IS THROWN OUT OF EMPLOY.—CLOSING REMARKS ON THE CONWAY CABAL.

THE Conway letter was destined to be a further source of trouble to the cabal. Lord Stirling, in whose presence, at Reading, Wilkinson had cited the letter, and who had sent information of it to Washington, was now told that Wilkinson, on being questioned by General Conway, had declared that no such words as those reported, nor any to the same effect, were in the letter.

His lordship immediately wrote to Wilkinson, reminding him of the conversation at Reading, and telling him of what he had recently heard.

"I well know," writes his lordship, "that it is impossible you could have made any such declaration; but it will give great satisfaction to many of your friends to know whether Conway made such inquiry, and what was your answer; they would also be glad to know what were the words of the letter, and I should be very much obliged to you for a copy of it."

Wilkinson found that his tongue had again brought him into difficulty; but he trusted to his rhetoric, rather than his logic, to get him out of it. He wrote in reply, that he perfectly remembered spending a social day with his lordship at Reading, in which the conversation became general, unreserved, and copious; though the tenor of his lordship's discourse, and the nature of their situation, made it confidential. "I cannot, therefore," adds he, logically, "recapitulate particulars, or charge my memory with the circumstances you mention; but, my lord, I disdain low craft, subtlety, and evasion, and will acknowledge it is possible, in the warmth of social intercourse, when the mind is relaxed and the heart is unguarded, that observations may have elapsed which have not since occurred

to me. On my late arrival in camp, Brigadier-general Conway informed me that he had been charged by General Washington with writing a letter to Major-general Gates, which reflected on the general and the army. The particulars of this charge, which Brigadier-general Conway then repeated, I cannot now recollect. I had read the letter alluded to; I did not consider the information conveyed in his Excellency's letter, as expressed by Brigadier-general Conway, to be literal, and well remember replying to that effect in dubious terms. I had no inducement to stain my veracity, were I ever so prone to that infamous vice, as Brigadier Conway informed me he had justified the charge.

"I can scarce credit my senses, when I read the paragraph in which you request an extract from a private letter, which had fallen under my observation. *I have been indiscreet, my lord, but be assured I will not be dishonorable.*"

This communication of Lord Stirling, Wilkinson gives as the first intimation he had received of his being implicated in the disclosure of Conway's letter. When he was subsequently on his way to Yorktown to enter upon his duties as secretary of the Board of War, he learnt at Lancaster that General Gates had denounced him as the betrayer of that letter, and had spoken of him in the grossest language.

"I was shocked by this information," writes he: "I had sacrificed my lineal rank at General Gates' request; I had served him with zeal and fidelity, of which he possessed the strongest evidence; yet he had condemned me unheard for an act of which I was perfectly innocent, and against which every feeling of my soul revolted with horror. . . . I worshipped honor as the jewel of my soul, and did not pause for the course to be pursued; but I owed it to disparity of years and rank, to former connection and the affections of my own breast, to drain the cup of conciliation and seek an explanation."

The result of these, and other misfortunes, expressed with that grandiloquence on which Wilkinson evidently prided himself, was a letter to Gates, reminding him of the zeal and devotion with which he had uniformly asserted and maintained his cause; "but, sir," adds he, "in spite of every consideration, you have wounded my honor, and must make acknowledgment or satisfaction for the injury.

"In consideration of our past connection, I descend to that explanation with you which I should have denied any other man. The inclosed letters unmask the villain and evince my innocence. My lord shall bleed for his conduct, but it is proper I first see you."

The letters inclosed were those between him and Lord Stirling, the exposition of which he alleges ought to acquit him of sinister intention, and stamp the report of his lordship to General Washington with palpable falsehood.

Gates writes briefly in reply. "Sir,—The following extract of a letter from General Washington to me will show you how your honor has been called in question; which is all the explanation necessary upon this matter; any other satisfaction you may command."

Then followed the extracts giving the information communicated by Wilkinson to Major McWilliams, Lord Stirling's aide-de-camp.

"After reading the whole of the above extract," adds Gates, "I am astonished, if you really gave Major McWilliams such information, how you could intimate to me that it was *possible* Colonel Troup *had conversed* with Colonel Hamilton upon the subject of General Conway's letter."

According to Wilkinson's story he now proceeded to Yorktown, purposely arriving in the twilight, to escape observation. There he met with an old comrade, Captain Stoddart, recounted his wrongs, and requested him to be the bearer of a message to General Gates. Stoddart refused; and warned him that he was running headlong to destruction: "but ruin," observes Wilkinson, "had no terrors for an ardent young man, who prized his honor a thousand fold more than his life, and who was willing to hazard his eternal happiness in its defense."

He accidentally met with another military friend, Lieutenant colonel Ball, of the Virginia line, "whose spirit was as independent as his fortune." He willingly became bearer of the following note from Wilkinson to General Gates:—

"Sir,—I have discharged my duty to you, and to my conscience; meet me to-morrow morning behind the English church and I will there stipulate the satisfaction which you have promised to grant," etc.

Colonel Ball was received with complaisance by the general. The meeting was fixed for eight o'clock in the morning, with pistols.

At the appointed time Wilkinson and his second, having put their arms in order, were about to sally forth, when Captain Stoddart made his appearance, and informed Wilkinson that Gates desired to speak with him. Where?—In the street near the door.—"The surprise robbed me of circumspection," continues Wilkinson. "I requested Colonel Ball to halt, and followed Captain Stoddart. I found General Gates unarmed and alone, and was received with tenderness but manifest embar-

rassment: he asked me to walk, turned into a back street, and we proceeded in silence till we passed the buildings, when he burst into tears, took me by the hand, and asked me 'how I could think he wished to injure me?' I was too deeply affected to speak, and he relieved my embarrassment by continuing; '*I injure you! it is impossible. I should as soon think of injuring my own child.*' This language," observes Wilkinson, "not only disarmed me, but awakened all my confidence and all my tenderness. I was silent; and he added, 'Besides, there was no cause for injuring you, as Conway acknowledged his letter, and has since said much harder things to Washington's face.'

"Such language left me nothing to require," continues Wilkinson. "It was satisfactory beyond expectation, and rendered me more than content. I was flattered and pleased; and if a third person had doubted the sincerity of the explanation, I would have insulted him."

A change soon came over the spirit of this maudlin scene. Wilkinson attended as secretary at the War Office. "My reception from the president, General Gates," writes he, "did not correspond with his recent professions; he was civil, but barely so, and I was at a loss to account for his coldness, yet had no suspicion of his insincerity."

Wilkinson soon found his situation at the Board of War uncomfortable; and after the lapse of a few days set out for Valley Forge. On his way thither he met Washington's old friend, Dr. Craik, and learnt from him that his promotion to the rank of brigadier-general by brevet, had been remonstrated against to Congress by forty-seven colonels. He therefore sent in his resignation, not wishing, he said, to hold it, unless he could wear it to the honor and advantage of his country; "and this conduct," adds he, "however repugnant to fashionable ambition, I find consistent with those principles in which I early drew my sword in the present contest."

At Lancaster, Wilkinson, recollecting his resolve that Lord Stirling "should bleed for his conduct," requested his friend, Colonel Moylan, to deliver a "peremptory message" to his lordship. The colonel considered the measure rather precipitate, and suggested that a suitable acknowledgment from his lordship would be a more satisfactory reparation of the wrong than a sacrifice of the life of either of the parties. "There is not in the whole range of my friends, acquaintance, and I might add in the universe," exclaims Wilkinson, "a man of more sublimated sentiment, or who combined with sound discretion a more punctilious sense of honor, than Colonel Moylan." Taking the colonel's advice, therefore, he moderated his per-

empty message to the following note: "My Lord,—The propriety or impropriety of your communicating to his Excellency any circumstance which passed at your lordship's board at Reading, I leave to be determined by your own feelings and the judgment of the public; but as the affair has eventually induced reflections on my integrity, the sacred duty I owe my honor obliges me to request from your lordship's hand, that the conversation which you have published *passed in a private company during a convivial hour.*"

His lordship accordingly gave it under his hand that the words passed under such circumstances, but under no injunction of secrecy. Whereupon Wilkinson's irritable but easily pacified honor was appeased, and his sword slept in its sheath.

At Valley Forge Wilkinson had an interview with Washington, in which the subject of General Conway's letter was discussed, and the whole correspondence between Gates and the commander-in-chief laid before him.

"This exposition," writes Wilkinson, "unfolded to me a scene of perfidy and duplicity of which I had no suspicion." It drew from him the following letter to Washington, dated March 28th: "I beg you to receive the grateful homage of a sensible mind for your condescension in exposing to me General Gates' letters, which unmask his artifices and efforts to ruin me. The authenticity of the information received through Lord Stirling I cannot confirm, as I solemnly assure your Excellency I do not remember the conversation which passed on that occasion, nor can I recollect particular passages of that letter, as I had but a cursory view of it at a late hour. However, I so well remember its general tenor, that, although General Gates has pledged his word it was a wicked and malicious forgery, I will stake my reputation, if the genuine letter is produced, that words to the same effect will appear."

A few days afterwards, Wilkinson addressed the following letter to the President of Congress:—

"SIR,—While I make my acknowledgments to Congress, for the appointment of Secretary to the Board of War and Ordnance, I am sorry I should be constrained to resign that office; but, after the acts of *treachery* and *falsehood* in which I have detected Major-general Gates, the president of that board, it is impossible for me to reconcile it to my honor to serve with him." *

After recording this letter in his memoirs, Wilkinson adds;

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 409.

"I had previously resigned my brevet of brigadier-general, on grounds of patriotism; but I still retained my commission of colonel, which was never to my knowledge revoked; yet the dominant influence of General Gates, and the feuds, and factions, and intrigues which prevailed in Congress and in the army of that day, threw me out of employ."—There we shall leave him; it was a kind of retirement which we apprehend he had richly merited, and we doubt whether his country would have been the loser had he been left to enjoy it for the remainder of his days.

Throughout all the intrigues and manœuvres of the cabal, a part of which we have laid before the reader, Washington had conducted himself with calmness and self-command, speaking on the subject to no one but a very few of his friends; lest a knowledge of those internal dissensions should injure the service.

In a letter to Patrick Henry he gives his closing observations concerning them. "I cannot precisely mark the extent of their views; but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorized to say, from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications, the evident scope of which could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated. General Mifflin, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was a very active and malignant partisan; but I have good reason to believe that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves."

An able and truthful historian, to whose researches we are indebted for most of the documents concerning the cabal, gives it as his opinion that there is not sufficient evidence to prove any concerted plan of action or any fixed design among the leaders: a few aspiring men like Gates and Mifflin, might have flattered themselves with indefinite hopes, and looked forward to a change as promising the best means of aiding their ambitious views; but that it was not probable they had united in any clear or fixed purpose.*

These observations are made with that author's usual candor and judgment; yet, wanting as the intrigues of the cabal might be in plan or fixed design, they were fraught with mischief to the public service, inspiring doubts of its commanders and seeking to provoke them to desperate enterprises. They harassed Washington in the latter part of his campaign, contributed to

* Sparks' *Writings of Washington*, vol. v. Appendix—where there is a series of documents respecting the Conway Cabal.

the dark cloud that hung over his gloomy encampment at Valley Forge, and might have effected his downfall, had he been more irascible in his temper, more at the mercy of impulse, and less firmly fixed in the affections of the people. As it was, they only tended to show wherein lay his surest strength. Jealous rivals he might have in the army, bitter enemies in Congress, but the soldiers loved him, and the large heart of the nation always beat true to him.

NOTE.

The following anecdote of the late Governor Jay, one of our purest and most illustrious statesmen, is furnished to us by his son Judge Jay :—

“Shortly before the death of John Adams, I was sitting alone with my father, conversing about the American Revolution. Suddenly he remarked, ‘Ah, William ! the history of that Revolution will never be known. Nobody now alive knows it but John Adams and myself.’ Surprised at such a declaration, I asked him to what he referred ? He briefly replied, ‘The proceedings of the old Congress.’ Again I inquired, ‘What proceedings ?’ He answered, ‘Those against Washington ; from first to last there was a most bitter party against him.’”

As the old Congress always sat with closed doors, the public knew no more of what passed within than what it was deemed expedient to disclose.

CHAPTER XLVI.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT.—REFORMS IN THE ARMY.—SCARCITY IN THE CAMP.—THE ENEMY REVEL IN PHILADELPHIA.—ATTEMPT TO SURPRISE LIGHT-HORSE HARRY.—HIS GAL-
LANT DEFENSE.—PRAISED BY WASHINGTON.—PROMOTED.—
LETTER FROM GENERAL LEE.—BURGOYNE RETURNS TO EN-
GLAND.—MRS. WASHINGTON AT VALLEY FORGE.—BRYAN
FAIRFAX VISITS THE CAMP.—ARRIVAL OF THE BARON STEU-
BEN.—HIS CHARACTER.—DISCIPLINES THE ARMY.—GREENE
MADE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

DURING the winter's encampment in Valley Forge, Washington sedulously applied himself to the formation of a new system for the army. At his earnest solicitation Congress appointed a committee of five, called the Committee of Arrangement, to repair to the camp and assist him in the task.*

* Names of the committee—General Reed, Nathaniel Folsom, Francis Dana, Charles Carrol, and Gouverneur Morris,

Before their arrival he had collected the written opinions and suggestions of his officers on the subject, and from these, and his own observations and experience, had prepared a document exhibiting the actual state of the army, the defects of previous systems, and the alterations and reforms that were necessary. The committee remained three months with him in camp, and then made a report to Congress founded on his statement. The reforms therein recommended were generally adopted. On one point, however, there was much debate. Washington had urged that the pay of the officers was insufficient for their decent subsistence, especially during the actual depreciation of the currency; and that many resignations were the consequence. He recommended not only that their pay should be increased, but that there should be a provision for their future support, by half pay and a pensionary establishment, so as to secure them from being absolutely impoverished in the service of their country.

This last recommendation had to encounter a great jealousy of the army on the part of Congress, and all that Washington could effect by strenuous and unremitted exertions, was a kind of compromise, according to which officers were to receive half-pay for seven years after the war, and non-commissioned officers and privates eighty dollars each.

The reforms adopted were slow in going into operation. In the meantime, the distresses of the army continued to increase. The surrounding country for a great distance was exhausted, and had the appearance of having been pillaged. In some places where the inhabitants had provisions and cattle they denied it, intending to take them to Philadelphia, where they could obtain greater prices. The undisturbed communication with the city had corrupted the minds of the people in its vicinage. "This State is sick even unto the death," said Gouverneur Morris.

The parties sent out to forage too often returned empty-handed. "For some days past there has been little less than a famine in the camp," writes Washington, on one occasion. "A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been, ere this, excited by their suffering to a general mutiny and desertion."

The committee, in their report, declared that the want of straw had cost the lives of many of the troops. "Unprovided with this, or materials to raise them from the cold and wet earth, sickness and mortality have spread through their quarters in an

astonishing degree. Nothing can equal their sufferings except the patience and fortitude with which the faithful part of the army endure them. "A British historian cites as a proof of the great ascendancy of Washington over his "raw and undisciplined troops," that so many remained with him throughout the winter, in this wretched situation and still more wretched plight; almost naked, often on short allowance, with great sickness and mortality, and a scarcity of medicines, their horses perishing by hundreds from hunger and the severity of the season. He gives a striking picture of the indolence and luxury which reigned at the same time in the British army in Philadelphia. It is true, the investment of the city by the Americans rendered provisions dear and fuel scanty; but the consequent privations were felt by the inhabitants, not by their invaders. The latter reveled as if in a conquered place. Private houses were occupied without rendering compensation; the officers were quartered on the principal inhabitants, many of whom were of the Society of "Friends" some even transgressed so far against propriety as to introduce their mistresses into the quarters thus oppressively obtained. The quiet habits of the city were outraged by the dissolute habits of a camp. Gaming prevailed to a shameless degree. A foreign officer kept a faro bank, at which he made a fortune, and some of the young officers ruined themselves.

"During the whole of this long winter of riot and dissipation," continues the same writer, "Washington was suffered to remain undisturbed at Valley Forge, with an army not exceeding five thousand effective men, and his cannon frozen up and immovable. A nocturnal attack might have forced him to a disadvantageous action or compelled him to a disastrous retreat, leaving behind him his sick, cannon, ammunition, and heavy baggage. It might have opened the way for supplies to the city, and shaken off the lethargy of the British army. In a word," adds he, "had General Howe led on his troops to action, victory was in his power and conquest in his train."*

Without assenting to the probability of such a result, it is certain that the army for a part of the winter, while it held Philadelphia in siege, was in as perilous a situation as that which kept a bold front before Boston, without ammunition to serve its cannon.

On one occasion there was a flurry at the most advanced post, where Captain Henry Lee (Light-horse Harry) with a few of his troops was stationed. He made himself formidable to the

* Stedman.

enemy by harassing their foraging parties. An attempt was made to surprise him. A party of about two hundred dragoons, taking a circuitous route in the night, came upon him by day-break. He had but a few men with him at the time, and took post in a large store-house. His scanty force did not allow a soldier for each window. The dragoons attempted to force their way into the house. There was a warm contest. The dragoons were bravely repulsed, and sheered off, leaving two killed and four wounded. "So well directed was the opposition," writes Lee to Washington, "that we drove them from the stables, and saved every horse. We have got the arms, some cloaks, etc., of their wounded. The enterprise was certainly daring, though the issue of it very ignominious. I had not a soldier for each window."

Washington, whose heart evidently warmed more and more to this young Virginian officer, the son of his "lowland beauty," not content with noticing his exploit in general orders, wrote a note to him on the subject, expressed with unusual familiarity and warmth. "My dear Lee," writes he, "although I have given you my thanks in the general orders of this day, for the late instance of your gallant behavior, I cannot resist the inclination I feel to repeat them again in this manner. I needed no fresh proof of your merit to bear you in remembrance. I waited only for the proper time and season to show it; those I hope are not far off. . . . Offer my sincere thanks to the whole of your gallant party, and assure them, that no one felt pleasure more sensibly, or rejoiced more sincerely for your and their escape, than your affectionate," etc.

In effect, Washington not long afterwards strongly recommended Lee for the command of two troops of horse, with the rank of major, to act as an independent partisan corps. "His genius," observes he, "particularly adapts him to a command of this nature; and it will be the most agreeable to him of any station in which he could be placed."

It was a high gratification to Washington when Congress made this appointment; accompanying it with encomiums on Lee as a brave and prudent officer, who had rendered essential service to the country, and acquired distinguished honor to himself and the corps he commanded.

About the time that Washington was gladdened by the gallantry and good fortune of "Light-horse Harry," he received a letter from another Lee, the captive general, still in the hands of the enemy. It had been written nearly a month previously. "I have the strongest reason to flatter myself," writes Lee, "that you will interest yourself in whatever interests my com-

fort and welfare. I think it my duty to inform you that my situation is much bettered. It is now five days that I am on my parole. I have the full liberty of the city and its limits; have horses at my command furnished by Sir Henry Clinton and General Robertson; am lodged with two of the oldest and warmest friends I have in the world, Colonel Butler and Colonel Disney of the forty-second regiment. In short, my situation is rendered as easy, comfortable and pleasant as possible, for a man who is in any sort a prisoner."

Washington in reply expressed his satisfaction at learning that he was released from confinement, and permitted so many indulgences. "You may rest assured," adds he, "that I feel myself very much interested in your welfare, and that every exertion has been used on my part to effect your exchange. This I have not been able to accomplish. However, from the letters which have lately passed between Sir William Howe and myself, upon the subject of prisoners, I am authorized to expect that you will return in a few days to your friends on parole, as Major-general Prescott will be sent in on the same terms for that purpose."

Difficulties, however, still occurred; and General Lee and Colonel Ethan Allen were doomed for a few months longer to suffer the annoyance of hope deferred.

The embarkation of General Burgoyne and his troops from Boston, became also a subject of difficulty and delay; it being alleged that some stipulations of the treaty of surrender had not been complied with. After some correspondence, and discussion, it was resolved in Congress that the embarkation should be suspended, until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention should be properly notified to that body by the court of Great Britain. Burgoyne subsequently obtained permission for his own return to England on parole, on account of ill health.

In the month of February, Mrs. Washington rejoined the general at Valley Forge, and took up her residence at headquarters. The arrangements consequent to her arrival bespeak the simplicity of style in this rude encampment. "The general's apartment is very small," writes she to a friend; "he has had a log cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first."

Lady Stirling, Mrs. Knox, the wife of the general, and the wives of others of the officers were also in the camp. The reforms in the commissariat had begun to operate. Provisions arrived in considerable quantities; supplies, on their way to the Philadelphia market to load the British tables, were inter-

cepted and diverted into the hungry camp of the patriots; magazines were formed in Valley Forge; the threatened famine was averted; "grim-visaged war" gradually relaxed his features, and affairs in the encampment began to assume a more cheering aspect.

In the latter part of the winter, Washington was agreeably surprised by a visit from his old and highly esteemed friend, Bryan Fairfax. That gentleman, although he disapproved of the measures of the British government which had severed the colonies from the mother country, was still firm in allegiance to his king. This had rendered his situation uncomfortable among his former intimates, who were generally embarked in the Revolution. He had resolved, therefore, to go to England, and remain there until the peace. Washington, who knew his integrity and respected his conscientiousness, received him with the warm cordiality of former and happier days; for indeed he brought with him recollections always dear to his heart, of Mount Vernon, and Belvoir, and Virginia life, and the pleasant banks of the Potomac. As Mr. Fairfax intended to embark at New York, Washington furnished him with a passport to that city. Being arrived there, the conscience of Mr. Fairfax prevented him from taking the oaths prescribed, which he feared might sever him from his wife and children, and he obtained permission from the British commander to return to them. On his way home he revisited Washington, and the kindness he again experienced from him, so different from the harshness with which others had treated him, drew from him a grateful letter of acknowledgment after he had arrived in Virginia.

"There are times," said he, "when favors conferred make a greater impression than at others, for, though I have received many, I hope I have not been unmindful of them; yet, that at a time your popularity was at the highest and mine at the lowest, and when it is so common for men's resentments to run high against those who differ from them in opinion, you should act with your wonted kindness towards me, has affected me more than any favor I have received; and could not be believed by some in New York, it being above the run of common minds."*

Washington, in reply, expressed himself gratified by the sentiments of his letter and confident of their sincerity. "The friendship," added he, "which I ever professed and felt for

* Bryan Fairfax continued to reside in Virginia until his death, which happened in 1802, at seventy-five years of age. He became proprietor of Belvoir and heir to the family title, but the latter he never assumed. During the latter years of his life he was a clergyman of the Episcopal church.

you, met with no diminution from the difference in our political sentiments. I knew the rectitude of my own intentions, and believing in the sincerity of yours, lamented, though, I did not condemn, your renunciation of the creed I had adopted. Nor do I think any person or power ought to do it, whilst your conduct is not opposed to the general interest of the people and the measures they are pursuing; the latter, that is our actions, depending upon ourselves, may be controlled; while the powers of thinking, originating in higher causes, cannot always be moulded to our wishes."

The most important arrival in the camp was that of the Baron Steuben towards the latter part of February. He was a seasoned soldier from the old battlefields of Europe; having served in the seven years' war, been aide-de-camp to the great Frederick, and connected with the quartermaster-general's department. Honors had been heaped upon him in Germany. After leaving the Prussian army he had been grand marshal of the court of the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, colonel in the circle of Suabia, lieutenant-general under the Prince Margrave of Baden, and knight of the Order of Fidelity; and he had declined liberal offers from the King of Sardinia and the Emperor of Austria. With an income of about three thousand dollars, chiefly arising from various appointments, he was living pleasantly in distinguished society at the German courts, and making occasional visits to Paris, when he was persuaded by the Count de St Germain, French Minister of War, and others of the French cabinet, to come out to America and engage in the cause they were preparing to befriend. Their object was to secure for the American armies the services of an officer of experience and a thorough disciplinarian. Through their persuasions he resigned his several offices, and came out at forty-eight years of age, a soldier of fortune, to the rude fighting grounds of America, to aid a half-disciplined people in their struggle for liberty. No certainty of remuneration was held out to him, but there was an opportunity for acquiring military glory; a probability of adequate reward should the young republic be successful; and it was hinted that, at all events, the French court would not suffer him to be a loser. As his means, on resigning his offices, were small, Beaumarchais furnished funds for his immediate expenses.

The baron had brought strong letters from Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, our envoys at Paris, and from the Count St. Germain. Landing at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, December 1st, he had forwarded copies of his letters to Washington. "The object of my greatest ambition," writes he, "is to render

your country all the service in my power, and to deserve the title of a citizen of America by fighting for the cause of your liberty. If the distinguished ranks in which I have served in Europe should be an obstacle, I had rather serve under your Excellency as a volunteer, than to be an object of discontent among such deserving officers as have already distinguished themselves among you."

"I would say, moreover," adds he, "were it not for the fear of offending your modesty, that your Excellency is the only person under whom, after having served under the king of Prussia, I could wish to pursue an art to which I have wholly given myself up."

By Washington's direction the baron had proceeded direct to Congress. His letters procured him a distinguished reception from the president. A committee was appointed to confer with him. He offered his services as a volunteer: making no condition for rank or pay, but trusting, should he prove himself worthy and the cause be crowned with success, he would be indemnified for the sacrifices he had made, and receive such further compensation as he might be thought to merit.

The committee having made their report, the baron's proffered services were accepted with a vote of thanks for his disinterestedness, and he was ordered to join the army at Valley Forge. That army in its ragged condition and squalid quarters, presented a sorry aspect to a strict disciplinarian from Germany, accustomed to the order and appointments of European camps; and the baron often declared, that under such circumstances no army in Europe could be kept together for a single month. The liberal mind of Steuben, however, made every allowance; and Washington soon found in him a consummate soldier, free from pedantry or pretension.

The evils arising from a want of uniformity in discipline and manœuvres throughout the army, had long caused Washington to desire a well-organized inspectorship. He knew that the same desire was felt by Congress. Conway had been appointed to that office, but had never entered upon its duties. The baron appeared to be peculiarly well qualified for such a department; Washington determined, therefore, to set on foot a temporary institution of the kind. Accordingly he proposed to the baron to undertake the office of inspector-general. The latter cheerfully agreed. Two ranks of inspectors were appointed under him; the lowest to inspect brigades, the highest to superintend several of these. Among the inspectors was a French gentleman of the name of Ternant, chosen not only for his intrinsic merit and abilities, but on account of his being well versed in

the English as well as the French language, which made him a necessary assistant to the baron, who, at times, needed an interpreter. The gallant Fleury, to whom Congress had given the rank and pay of lieutenant-colonel, and who had exercised the office of aide-major in France, was soon after employed likewise as an inspector.*

In a little while the whole army was under drill; for a great part, made up of raw militia, scarcely knew the manual exercise. Many of the officers, too, knew little of manœuvring, and the best of them had much to learn. The baron furnished his sub-inspectors with written instructions relative to their several functions. He took a company of soldiers under his immediate training, and after he had sufficiently schooled it, made it a model for the others, exhibiting the manœuvres they had to practice

It was a severe task at first for the aide-de-camp of the great Frederick to operate upon such raw materials. His ignorance of the language, too, increased the difficulty, where manœuvres were to be explained or rectified. He was in despair, until an officer of a New York regiment, Captain Walker, who spoke French, stepped forward and offered to act as interpreter. "Had I seen an angel from Heaven," says the baron, "I could not have been more rejoiced." He made Walker his aide-de-camp, and from that time had him always at hand.

For a time, there was nothing but drills throughout the camp, then gradually came evolutions of every kind. The officers were schooled as well as the men. The troops, says a person who was present in the camp, were paraded in a single line with shouldered arms; every officer in his place. The baron passed in front, then took the musket of each soldier in hand, to see whether it was clean and well polished, and examined whether the men's accoutrements were in good order.

He was sadly worried for a time with the militia; especially when any manœuvre was to be performed. The men blundered in their exercise; the baron* blundered in his English; his French and German were of no avail; he lost his temper, which was rather warm; swore in all three languages at once, which made the matter worse, and at length called his aide to his assistance; to help him curse the blockheads, as it was pretended—but no doubt to explain the manœuvre.*

* Washington to the President of Cong. Sparks, v. 347.

† On one occasion having exhausted all his German and French oaths, he vociferated to his aide-de-camp, Major Walker, "Vien mon ami Walker—vien mon bon ami.—Sacra—G—dam de gaucherie of dese badauts—je ne puis plus—I can curse dem no more."—*Carden, Anecdotes of the Am. War*, p. 341,

Still the grand marshal of the court of Hohenzollern mingled with the veteran soldier of Frederick, and tempered his occasional bursts of impatience; and he had a kind, generous heart, that soon made him a favorite with the men. His discipline extended to their comforts. He inquired into their treatment by the officers. He examined the doctor's reports; visited the sick; and saw that they were well lodged and attended.

He was an example, too, of the regularity and system he exacted. One of the most alert and indefatigable men in the camp; up at daybreak if not before, whenever there were to be any important manœuvres, he took his cup of coffee and smoked his pipe while his servant dressed his hair, and by sunrise he was in the saddle, equipped at all points, with the star of his order of knighthood glittering on his breast, and was off to the parade, alone, if his suite were not ready to attend him.

The strong good sense of the baron was evinced in the manner in which he adapted his tactics to the nature of the army and the situation of the country, instead of adhering with bigotry to the systems of Europe. His instructions were appreciated by all. The officers received them gladly and conformed to them. The men soon became active and adroit. The army gradually acquired a proper organization, and began to operate like a great machine; and Washington found in the baron an intelligent, disinterested, truthful coadjutor, well worthy of the badge he wore as a knight of the Order of *Fidelity*.

Another great satisfaction to Washington, was the appointment by Congress (March 3d) of Greene to the office of quartermaster-general; still retaining his rank of major-general in the army. The confusion and derangement of this department during the late campaign, while filled by General Mifflin, had been a source of perpetual embarrassment. That officer, however capable of doing his duty, was hardly ever at hand. The line and the staff were consequently at variance; and the country was plundered in a way sufficient to breed a civil war between the staff and the inhabitants. Washington was often obliged to do the duties of the office himself, until he declared to the Committee of Congress that "he would stand quartermaster no longer."* Greene undertook the office with reluctance, and agreed to perform the military duties of it without compensation for the space of a year. He found it in great disorder and confusion, but, by extraordinary exertions and excellent system, so arranged it, as to put the army in a condition to take the field and move with rapidity the moment it should

* *Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 274.

be required.* The favor in which Greene stood with the commander-in-chief, was a continual cause of mean jealousy and cavil among the intriguing and the envious; but it arose from the abundant proofs Washington had received in times of trial and difficulty, that he had a brave, affectionate heart, a sound head, and an efficient arm, on all of which he could thoroughly rely.

CHAPTER XLVII.

FORTIFICATIONS OF THE HUDSON.—PROJECT TO SURPRISE SIR HENRY CLINTON.—GENERAL HOWE FORAGES THE JERSEYS.—SHIPS AND STORES BURNT AT BORDENTOWN.—PLANS FOR THE NEXT CAMPAIGN.—GATES AND MIFFLIN UNDER WASHINGTON'S COMMAND.—DOWNFALL OF CONWAY.—LORD NORTH'S CONCILIATORY BILLS.—SENT TO WASHINGTON BY GOVERNOR TRYON.—RESOLVES OF CONGRESS.—LETTER OF WASHINGTON TO TRYON.—REJOICING AT VALLEY FORGE.—THE MISCHIANZA.

THE Highlands of the Hudson had been carefully reconnoitered in the course of the winter by General Putnam, Governor Clinton, his brother James, and several others, and subsequently by a committee from the New York Legislature, to determine upon the most eligible place to be fortified. West Point was ultimately chosen; and Putnam was urged by Washington to have the works finished as soon as possible. The general being called to Connecticut by his private affairs, and being involved in an inquiry to be made into the loss of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, Major-general McDougall was ordered to the Highlands, to take command of the different posts in that department, and to press forward the construction of the works in which he was to be assisted by Kosciuszko as engineer.

Before General McDougall's arrival, Brigadier-general Parsons had command at West Point. A letter of Washington to the latter suggests an enterprise of a somewhat romantic character. It was no less than to pounce upon Sir Henry Clinton, and carry him off prisoner from his head-quarters in the city of New York. The general was quartered in the Ken-

* Washington to Greene.—*Writings of Washington*, vol. vii. p. 152.

nedy house near the battery, but a short distance from the Hudson. His situation was rather lonely ; most of the houses in that quarter having been consumed in the great fire. A retired way led from it through a back yard or garden to the river bank, where Greenwich street extends at present. The idea of Washington was, that an enterprising party should embark in eight or ten whale-boats at King's Ferry, just below the Highlands, on the first of the ebb, and early in the evening. In six or eight hours, with change of hands, the boats might be rowed under the shadows of the western shore, and approach New York with muffled oars. There were no ships of war at that time on that side of the city ; all were in the East River. The officers and men to be employed in the enterprise were to be dressed in red, and much in the style of the British soldiery. Having captured Sir Henry, they might return in their swift whale-boats with the flood tide, or a party of horse might meet them at Fort Lee. "What guards may be at or near his quarters, I cannot say with precision," writes Washington, "and therefore shall not add anything on this score. But I think it one of the most practicable, and surely it will be among the most desirable and honorable things imaginable to take him prisoner."

The enterprise, we believe, was never attempted. Colonel Hamilton is said to have paralyzed it. He agreed with Washington that there could be little doubt of its success ; "but, sir," said he, "have you examined the consequences of it ?" "In what respect ?" asked the general. "Why," replied Hamilton, "we shall rather lose than gain by removing Sir Henry from the command of the British army, because we perfectly understand his character ; and by taking him off we only make way for some other, perhaps an abler officer, whose character and dispositions we have to learn." The shrewd suggestions of his aide-de-camp had their effect on Washington, and the project to abduct Sir Henry was abandoned.*

The spring opened without any material alteration in the dispositions of the armies. Washington at one time expected an attack upon his camp ; but Sir William was deficient in the necessary enterprise ; he contented himself with sending out parties which foraged the surrounding country for many miles, and scoured part of the Jerseys, bringing in considerable supplies. These forays were in some instances accompanied by wanton excesses and needless bloodshed ; the more unjustifiable, as they met with feeble resistance, especially in the Jer-

* *Wilkinson's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 852.

seys, where it was difficult to assemble militia in sufficient force to oppose them.

Another ravaging party ascended the Delaware in flat-bottomed boats and galleys ; set fire to public storehouses in Bordentown containing provisions and munitions of war ; burnt two frigates, several privateers, and a number of vessels of various classes, some of them laden with military stores. Had the armed vessels been sunk, according to the earnest advice of Washington, the greater part of them might have been saved.

A circular letter was sent by Washington on the 20th to all the general officers in camp, requesting their opinions in writing, which of three plans to adopt for the next campaign : to attempt the recovery of Philadelphia ; to transfer the war to the north and make an attempt on New York ; or to remain quiet in a secure and fortified camp, disciplining and arranging the army until the enemy should begin their operations ; then to be governed by circumstances.

Just after the issue of this circular, intelligence received from Congress showed that the ascendancy of the cabal was at an end. By a resolution of that body on the 15th, Gates was directed to resume the command of the Northern department, and to proceed forthwith to Fishkill for that purpose. He was invested with powers for completing the works on the Hudson, and authorized to carry on operations against the enemy should any favorable opportunity offer, for which purposes he might call for the artificers and militia of New York and Eastern States : but he was not to undertake any expedition against New York without previously consulting the commander-in-chief. Washington was requested to assemble a council of major-generals to determine upon a plan of operations, and Gates and Mifflin, by a subsequent resolution, were ordered to attend that council. This arrangement, putting Gates under Washington's order, evinced the determination of Congress to sustain the latter in his proper authority.

Washington, in a reply to the President of Congress, who had informed him of this arrangement, mentioned the circular he had just issued. "There is not a moment to be delayed," observed he, "in forming some general system, and I only await the arrival of Generals Gates and Mifflin to summon a council for the purpose. The next day (24th) he addressed a letter to Gates, requesting him, should he not find it inconvenient, to favor him with a call at the camp, to discuss the plan of operations for the campaign. A similar invitation was sent by him to Mifflin ; who eventually resumed his station in the line.

And here we may note the downfall of the intriguing individual who had given his name to the now extinguished cabal. Conway, after the departure of Lafayette and De Kalb from Albany, had remained but a short time in the command there, being ordered to join the army under General McDougall, stationed at Fishkill. Thence he was soon ordered back to Albany, whereupon he wrote an impertinent letter to the President of Congress, complaining that he was "boxed about in a most indecent manner."

"What is the meaning," demanded he, "of removing me from the scene of action on the opening of the campaign? I did not deserve this burlesque disgrace, and my honor will not permit me to bear it." In a word, he intimated a wish that the president would make his resignation acceptable to Congress.

To his surprise and consternation, his resignation was immediately accepted. He instantly wrote to the president, declaring that his meaning had been misapprehended; and accounted for it by some orthographical or grammatical faults in his letter, being an Irishman, who had learnt his English in France. "I had no thoughts of resigning," adds he, "while there was a prospect of firing a single shot, and especially at the beginning of a campaign which in my opinion will be a very hot one."

All his efforts to get reinstated were unavailing, though he went to Yorktown to make them in person. "Conway's appointment to the inspectorship of the army, with the rank of major-general, after he had insulted the commander-in-chief," observes Wilkinson, "was a splenetic measure of a majority of Congress, as factious as it was ill-judged."

They had become heartily ashamed of it; especially as it had proved universally unpopular. The office of inspector-general with the rank of major-general, with the proper pay and appointments, were, at Washington's recommendation, voted by them on the 6th of May to Baron Steuben, who had already performed the duties in so satisfactory a manner.

The capture of Burgoyne and his army was now operating with powerful effect on the cabinets of both England and France. With the former it was coupled with the apprehension that France was about to espouse the American cause. The consequence was Lord North's "Conciliatory Bills," as they were called, submitted by him to Parliament, and passed with but slight opposition. One of these bills regulated taxation in the American colonies, in a manner which, it was trusted, would obviate every objection. The other authorized the ap-

pointment of commissioners clothed with powers to negotiate with the existing governments ; to proclaim a cessation of hostilities ; to grant pardons, and to adopt other measures of a conciliatory nature.

"If what was now proposed was a right measure," observes a British historian, "it ought to have been adopted at first, and before the sword was drawn ; on the other hand, if the claims of the mother country over her colonies were originally worth contending for, the strength and resources of the nation were not yet so far exhausted as to justify ministers in relinquishing them without a further struggle." *

Intelligence that a treaty between France and the United States had actually been concluded at Paris, induced the British minister to hurry off a draft of the bills to America, to forestall the effects of the treaty upon the public mind. General Tryon caused copies of it to be printed in New York and circulated through the country. He sent several of them to General Washington, 15th April, with a request that they should be communicated to the officers and privates of his army.

NOTE.

As General Conway takes no further part in the events of this history, we shall briefly dispose of him. Disappointed in his aims, he became irritable in his temper, and offensive in his manners, and frequently indulged in acrimonious language respecting the commander-in-chief, that was highly resented by the army. In consequence of some dispute he became involved in a duel with General John Cadwalader, in which he was severely wounded. Thinking his end was approaching, he addressed the following penitential letter to Washington.

PHILADELPHIA, 23d July, 1778.

SIR,—I find myself just able to hold the pen during a few minutes, and take this opportunity of expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said anything disagreeable to your Excellency. My career will soon be over, therefore justice and truth prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are in my eyes the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of these States, whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.

I am, with the greatest respect, etc.,
THOMAS CONWAY.

Contrary to all expectation, he recovered from his wound ; but, finding himself without rank in the army, covered with public opprobrium, and his very name become a byword, he abandoned a country in which he had dishonored himself, and embarked for France in the course of the year.

* Stedman.

Washington felt the singular impertinence of the request. He transmitted them to Congress, observing that the time to entertain such overtures was past. "Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A peace on other terms would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a peace of war. The injuries we have received from the British nation were so unprovoked, and have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten." These and other objections advanced by him met with the concurrence of Congress, and it was unanimously resolved that no conference could be held, no treaty made with any commissioners on the part of Great Britain, until that power should have withdrawn its fleets and armies, or acknowledged in positive and express terms the independence of the United States.

On the following day, April 23d, a resolution was passed recommending to the different States to pardon, under such restrictions as might be deemed expedient, such of their citizens as, having levied war against the United States, should return to their allegiance before the 16th of June. Copies of this resolution were struck off in English and German, and inclosed by Washington in a letter to General Tryon, in which he indulged in a vein of grave irony.

"SIR,—Your letter of the 17th and a triplicate of the same were duly received. I had the pleasure of seeing the drafts of the two bills, before those which were sent by you came to hand; and I can assure you they were suffered to have a free currency among the officers and men under my command, in whose fidelity to the United States I have the most perfect confidence. The inclosed Gazette, published the 24th at Yorktown, will show you that it is the wish of Congress that they should have an unrestrained circulation.*

"I take the liberty to transmit to you a few printed copies of a resolution of Congress of the 23d instant, and to request that you will be instrumental in communicating its contents, so far as it may be in your power, to the persons who are the objects of its operations. The benevolent purpose it is intended to answer will, I persuade myself, sufficiently recommend it to your candor. I am, Sir," etc.

The tidings of the capitulation of Burgoyne had been equally

* In the Gazette of that date the Conciliatory Bills were published by order of Congress; as an instance of their reception by the public, we may mention that in Rhode Island the populace burned them under the gallows.

efficacious in quickening the action of the French cabinet. The negotiations, which had gone on so slowly as almost to reduce our commissioners to despair, were brought to a happy termination, and on the 2d of May, ten days after the passing by Congress of the resolves just cited, a messenger arrived express from France with two treaties, one of amity and commerce, the other of defensive alliance, signed in Paris on the 6th of February by M. Girard on the part of France, and by Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee on the part of the United States. This last treaty stipulated that, should war ensue between France and England, it should be made a common cause by the contracting parties, in which neither should make truce or peace with Great Britain without the consent of the other, nor either lay down their arms until the independence of the United States was established.

These treaties were unanimously ratified by Congress, and their promulgation was celebrated by public rejoicings throughout the country. The 6th of May was set apart for a military fête at the camp at Valley Forge. The army was assembled in best array; there was solemn thanksgiving by the chaplains at the head of each brigade; after which a grand parade, a national discharge of thirteen guns, a general *feu de joie*, and shouts of the whole army, "Long live the King of France—Long live the friendly European Powers—Huzza for the American States." A banquet succeeded, at which Washington dined in public with all the officers of his army, attended by a band of music. Patriotic toasts were given and heartily cheered. "I never was present," writes a spectator, "where there was such unfeigned and perfect joy as was discovered in every countenance. Washington retired at five o'clock, on which there was universal huzzaing and clapping of hands—'Long live General Washington.' The non-commissioned officers and privates followed the example of their officers as he rode past their brigades. The shouts continued till he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, and a thousand hats were tossed in the air. Washington and his suite turned round several times and cheered in reply." Gates and Mifflin, if in the camp at the time, must have seen enough to convince them that the commander-in-chief was supreme in the affections of the army.

On the 8th, the council of war, ordered by Congress, was convened, at which were present Major-generals Gates, Greene, Stirling, Mifflin, Lafayette, De Kalb, Armstrong, and Steuben, and Brigadier-generals Knox and Duportail. After the state of the forces, British and American, their number and distribution, had been laid before the council by the commander-

in-chief, and a full discussion had been held, it was unanimously determined to remain on the defensive, and not attempt any offensive operation until some opportunity should occur to strike a successful blow. General Lee was not present at the council, but afterward signed the decision.

While the Conciliatory Bills failed thus signally of their anticipated effect upon the Congress and people of the United States, they were regarded with indignation by the royal forces in America, as offering a humiliating contrast to the high and arrogant tone hitherto indulged towards the "rebels." They struck dismay, too, into the hearts of the American royalists and refugees, who beheld in them sure prognostics of triumph to the cause they had opposed, and of mortification and trouble, if not of exile, to themselves.

The military career of Sir William Howe in the United States was now drawing to a close. His conduct of the war had given much dissatisfaction in England. His enemies observed that everything gained by the troops was lost by the general; that he had suffered an enemy with less than four thousand men to reconquer a province which he had recently reduced, and lay a kind of siege to his army in their winter-quarters; * and that he had brought a sad reverse upon the British arms by failing to coöperate vigorously and efficiently with Burgoyne.

Sir William, on his part, had considered himself slighted by the ministry; his suggestions, he said, were disregarded, and the reinforcements withheld which he considered indispensable for the successful conduct of the war. He had therefore tendered his resignation, which had been promptly accepted, and Sir Henry Clinton ordered to relieve him. Clinton arrived in Philadelphia on the 8th of May, and took command of the army on the 11th.

Sir William Howe was popular among the officers of his army, from his open and engaging manners, and, perhaps, from the loose rule which indulged them in their social excesses. A number of them combined to close his inglorious residence in Philadelphia by a still more inglorious pageant. It was called the MISCHIANZA (or Medley), a kind of regatta and tournament; the former on the Delaware, the latter at a country-seat on its banks.

The regatta was in three divisions, each with its band of music, to which the oarsmen kept time.

The river was crowded with boats, which were kept at a dis-

* Stedman, vol. i. p. 384.

tance from the squadrons of gayly decorated barges, and the houses, balconies, and wharves along the shore were filled with spectators.

We forbear to give the fulsome descriptions of the land part of the Mischianza furnished by various pens; and will content ourselves with the following, from the pen of a British writer who was present. It illustrates sufficiently the absurdity of the scene.

"All the colors of the army were placed in a grand avenue three hundred feet in length, lined with the king's troops, between two triumphal arches, for the two brothers, the Admiral Lord Howe and the General Sir William Howe, to march along in pompous procession, followed by a numerous train of attendants, with seven silken Knights of the Blended Rose, and seven more of the Burning Mountain, and fourteen damsels dressed in the Turkish fashion, to an area of one hundred and fifty yards square, lined also with the king's troops, for the exhibition of a tilt and tournament, or mock fight of old chivalry, in honor of those two heroes. On the top of each triumphal arch was a figure of Fame bespangled with stars, blowing from her trumpet, in letters of light, *Tes lauriers sont immortels* (Thy laurels are immortal)." On this occasion, according to the same writer, "men compared the importance of Sir William's services with the merit he assumed, and the gravity with which he sustained the most excessive praise and adulation."

The unfortunate Major André, at that time a captain, was very efficient in getting up this tawdry and somewhat effeminate pageant. He had promoted private theatricals during the winter, and aided in painting scenery and devising decorations. He wrote a glowing description of the Mischianza, in a letter to a friend, pronouncing it as perhaps the most splendid entertainment ever given by any army to their general. He figured in it as one of the Knights of the Blended Rose. In a letter written to a lady, in the following year, he alludes to his preparations for it as having made him a complete milliner, and offers his services to furnish her supplies in that department.

At the time of this silken and mock heroic display, the number of British chivalry in Philadelphia was nineteen thousand five hundred and thirty, cooped up in a manner by an American force at Valley Forge, amounting, according to official returns to eleven thousand eight hundred men. Could any triumphant pageant be more ill-placed and ill-timed!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LAFAYETTE DETACHED TO KEEP WATCH ON PHILADELPHIA.— HIS POSITION AT BARREN HILL.—PLAN OF SIR HENRY TO ENTRAP HIM.—WASHINGTON ALARMED FOR HIS SAFETY.— STRATEGEM OF THE MARQUIS.—EXCHANGE OF GENERAL LEE AND COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN.—ALLEN AT VALLEY FORGE.— WASHINGTON'S OPINION OF HIM.— PREPARATIONS IN PHILADELPHIA TO EVACUATE.—WASHINGTON'S MEASURES IN CONSEQUENCE.—ARRIVAL OF COMMISSIONERS FROM ENGLAND.— THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT.— THEIR PROCEEDINGS.— THEIR FAILURE.—THEIR MANIFESTO.

Soon after Sir Henry Clinton had taken the command, there were symptoms of an intention to evacuate Philadelphia. Whither the enemy would thence direct their course was a matter of mere conjecture. Lafayette was therefore detached by Washington, with twenty-one hundred chosen men and five pieces of cannon, to take a position nearer the city, where he might be at hand to gain information, watch the movements of the enemy, check their predatory excursions, and fall on their rear when in the act of withdrawing.

The marquis crossed the Schuylkill on the 18th of May, and proceeded to Barren Hill, about half way between Washington's camp and Philadelphia, and about eleven miles from both. Here he planted his cannon facing the south, with rocky ridges bordering the Schuylkill on his right; woods and stone houses on his left. Behind him the roads forked, one branch leading to Matson's Ford of the Schuylkill, the other by Sweedes' Ford to Valley Forge. In advance of his left wing was McLane's company and about fifty Indians. Pickets and videttes were placed in the woods to the south, through which the roads led to Philadelphia, and a body of six hundred Pennsylvania militia were stationed to keep watch on the roads leading to White Marsh.

In the meantime Sir Henry Clinton, having received intelligence through his spies of this movement of Lafayette, concerted a plan to entrap the young French nobleman. Five thousand men were sent out at night, under General Grant, to make a circuitous march by White Marsh, and get in the rear of the Americans; another force under General Grey was to

cross to the west side of the Schuylkill, and take post below Barren Hill, while Sir Henry in person was to lead a third division along the Philadelphia road.

The plan came near being completely successful, through the remissness of the Pennsylvania militia, who had left their post of observation. Early in the morning, as Lafayette was conversing with a young girl, who was to go to Philadelphia and collect information, under pretext of visiting her relatives, word was brought that red-coats had been descried in the woods near White Marsh. Lafayette was expecting a troop of American dragoons in that quarter, who wore scarlet uniforms, and supposed these to be them; to be certain, however, he sent out an officer to reconnoiter. The latter soon came spurring back at full speed. A column of the enemy had pushed forward on the road from White Marsh, were within a mile of the camp, and had possession of the road leading to Valley Forge. Another column was advancing on the Philadelphia road. In fact, the young French general was on the point of being surrounded by a greatly superior force.

Lafayette saw his danger, but maintained his presence of mind. Throwing out small parties of troops to show themselves at various points of the intervening wood, as if an attack on Grant was meditated, he brought that general to a halt, to prepare for action, while he with his main body pushed forward for Matson's Ford on the Schuylkill.

The alarm-guns at sunrise had apprised Washington that the detachment under Lafayette was in danger. The troops at Valley Forge were instantly under arms. Washington, with his aides-de-camp and some of his general officers, galloped to the summit of a hill, and anxiously reconnoitered the scene of action with a glass. His solicitude for the marquis was soon relieved. The stratagem of the youthful warrior had been crowned with success. He completely gained the march upon General Grant, reached Matson's Ford in safety, crossed it in great order, and took a strong position on high grounds which commanded it. The enemy arrived at the river just in time for a skirmish as the artillery was crossing. Seeing that Lafayette had extricated himself from their hands, and was so strongly posted, they gave over all attack, and returned somewhat disconcerted to Philadelphia; while the youthful marquis rejoined the army at Valley Forge, where he was received with acclamations.

The exchange of General Lee for General Prescott, so long delayed by various impediments, had recently been effected; and Lee was reinstated in his position of second in command.

Colonel Ethan Allen, also, had been released from his long captivity in exchange for Colonel Campbell. Allen paid a visit to the camp at Valley Forge, where he had much to tell of his various vicissitudes and hardships. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress suggesting that something should be done for Allen, observes: "His fortitude and firmness seem to have placed him out of the reach of misfortune. There is an original something about him that commands admiration, and his long captivity and sufferings have only served to increase, if possible, his enthusiastic zeal. He appears very desirous of rendering his services to the States, and of being employed; and at the same time, he does not discover any ambition for high rank."

In a few days, a brevet commission of colonel arrived for Allen; but he had already left camp for his home in Vermont, where he appears to have hung up his sword; for we meet with no further achievements by him on record.

Indications continued to increase of the departure of troops from Philadelphia. The military quarters were in a stir and bustle; effects were packed up; many sold at auction; baggage and heavy cannon embarked; transports fitted up for the reception of horses, and hay taken on board. Was the whole army to leave the city, or only a part? The former was probable. A war between France and England appeared to be impending: in that event, Philadelphia would be an ineligible position for the British army.

New York, it was concluded, would be the place of destination; either as a rendezvous, or a post whence to attempt the occupation of the Hudson. Would they proceed thither by land or water? Supposing the former, Washington would gladly have taken post in Jersey, to oppose or harass them, on their march through that State. His camp, however, was encumbered by upwards of three thousand sick; and covered a great amount of military stores. He dared not weaken it by detaching a sufficient force; especially as it was said the enemy intended to attack him before their departure.

For three weeks affairs remained in this state. Washington held his army ready to march toward the Hudson at a moment's warning; and sent General Maxwell with a brigade of Jersey troops, to coöperate with Major-general Dickinson and the militia of that State, in breaking down the bridges and harassing the enemy, should they actually attempt to march through it. At the same time he wrote to General Gates, who was now at his post on the Hudson, urging him to call in as large a force of militia as he could find subsistence for, and to be on the alert for the protection of that river.

In the meantime, the commissioners empowered under the new Conciliatory Bills to negotiate the restoration of peace between Great Britain and her former colonies, arrived in the Delaware in the *Trident* ship of war. These were Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle; William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), brother of the last colonial governor of Maryland; and George Johnstone, sometimes called commodore, from having served in the navy, but more commonly known as Governor Johnstone, having held that office in Florida. He was now a member of Parliament, and in the opposition. Their secretary was the celebrated Dr. Adam Ferguson, an Edinburgh professor; author of a Roman History, and who in his younger days (he was now about fifty-five years of age) had been a "fighting chaplain at Fontenoy."

The choice of commissioners gave rise to much criticism and cavil; especially that of Lord Carlisle, a young man of fashion, amiable and intelligent, it is true, but unfitted by his soft European habits for such a mission. "To captivate the rude members of Congress," said Wilkes, "and civilize the wild inhabitants of an unpolished country, a noble peer was very properly appointed chief of the honorable embassy. His lordship, to the surprise and admiration of that part of the New World, carried with him a green ribbon, the gentle manners, winning behavior, and soft insinuating address of a modern man of quality and a professed courtier. The muses and graces with a group of little laughing loves were in his train and for the first time crossed the Atlantic."*

Mr. Eden, by his letter still in existence, † appears to have been unkindly disposed towards America. Johnstone was evidently the strongest member of the commission. Fox pronounced him "the only one who could have the ear of the people in America;" he alone had been their friend in Great Britain, and was acquainted with the people of Pennsylvania.

The commissioners landed at Philadelphia on the 6th of June, and discovered, to their astonishment, that they had come out, as it were, in the dark, on a mission in which but a half confidence had been reposed in them by government. Three weeks before their departure from England, orders had been sent out to Sir Henry Clinton to evacuate Philadelphia and concentrate his forces at New York; yet these orders were never imparted to them. Their letters and speeches testify their surprise and indignation at finding their plan of operations so completely disconcerted by their own cabinet. "We found everything

* 19 *Parliamentary Hist.*, 1338.

† *Force's Am. Archives*, vol. i. 962.

here," writes Lord Carlisle, "in great confusion; the army upon the point of leaving the town, and about three thousand of the miserable inhabitants embarked on board of our ships, to convey them from a place where they think they would receive no mercy from those who will take possession after us."

So Governor Johnstone, in speeches subsequently made in Parliament: "On my arrival, the orders for the evacuation had been made public—the city was in the utmost consternation: a more affecting spectacle of woe I never beheld." And again: "The commissioners were received at Philadelphia with all the joy which a generous people could express. Why were you so long a-coming? was the general cry. Do not abandon us. Retain the army and send them against Washington, and the affair is over. Ten thousand men will arm for you in this province, and ten thousand in the lower counties, the moment you take the field and can get arms. The declarations were general and notorious, and I am persuaded, if we had been at liberty to have acted in the field, our most sanguine expectations would have been fulfilled."

The orders for evacuation, however, were too peremptory to be evaded, but Johnstone declared that if he had known of them, he never would have gone on the mission. The commissioners had prepared a letter for Congress, merely informing that body of their arrival and powers, and their disposition to promote a reconciliation, intending quietly to await an answer; but the unexpected situation of affairs occasioned by the order for evacuation, obliged them to alter their resolution, and to write one of a different character, bringing forward at once all the powers delegated to them.

On the 9th June, Sir Henry Clinton informed Washington of the arrival of the commissioners, and requested a passport for their secretary, Dr. Ferguson, the historian, to proceed to Yorktown bearing a letter to Congress. Washington sent to Congress a copy of Sir Henry's letter, but did not consider himself at liberty to grant the passport until authorized by them.

Without waiting the result, the commissioners forwarded, by the ordinary military post, their letter, accompanied by the "Conciliatory Acts" and other documents. They were received by Congress on the 13th. The letter of the commissioners were addressed "to His Excellency, Henry Laurens, the President and others, the members of Congress." The reading of the letter was interrupted; and it came near being indignantly rejected, on account of expressions disrespectful to France; charging it with being the insidious enemy of both England and her colonies, and interposing its pretended friendship to

the latter "only to prevent reconciliation and prolong this destructive war." Several days elapsed before the Congress recovered sufficient equanimity to proceed with the despatches of the commissioners, and deliberate on the propositions they contained.

In their reply, signed by the president (June 17th), they observed, that nothing but an earnest desire to spare further effusion of blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions so disrespectful to his most Christian Majesty, or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honor of an independent nation; and in conclusion, they expressed a readiness to treat as soon as the king of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for peace, either by an explicit acknowledgement of the independence of the States, or by the withdrawal of his fleets and armies.

We will not follow the commissioners through their various attempts, overtly and covertly, to forward the object of their mission. We cannot, however, pass unnoticed an intimation conveyed from Governor Johnstone to General Joseph Reed, at this time an influential member of Congress, that effectual services on his part to restore the union of the two countries might be rewarded by ten thousand pounds sterling, and any office in the colonies in His Majesty's gift. To this, Reed made his brief and memorable reply: "I am not worth purchasing; but such as I am, the king of Great Britain is not rich enough to do it."

A letter was also written by Johnstone to Robert Morris, the celebrated financier, then also a member of Congress, containing the following significant paragraph: "I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives; but in all such transactions there is risk; and I think that whoever ventures, should be assured, at the same time, that honor and emolument should naturally follow the fortune of those who have steered the vessel in the storm and brought her safely into port. I think Washington and the President have a right to every favor that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interest, and spare the miseries and devastation of war."

These transactions and letters being communicated to Congress, were pronounced by them daring and atrocious attempts to corrupt their integrity, and they resolved that it was incompatible with their honor to hold any correspondence or intercourse with the commissioner who made it; especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty was concerned.

The commissioners, disappointed in their hopes of influencing Congress, attempted to operate on the feelings of the public, at one time by conciliatory appeals, at another by threats and denunciations. Their last measure was to publish a manifesto recapitulating their official proceedings; stating the refusal of Congress to treat with them, and offering to treat within forty days with deputies from all or any of the colonies or provincial Assemblies; holding forth, at the same time, the usual offers of conditional amnesty. This measure, like all which had preceded it, proved ineffectual; the commissioners embarked for England, and so terminated this tardy and blundering attempt of the British Government and its agents to effect a reconciliation—the last attempt that was made.

Lord Carlisle, who had taken the least prominent part in these transactions, thus writes in the course of them to his friend, the witty George Selwyn, and his letter may serve as a peroration. "I inclose you our manifesto, which you will never read. 'Tis a sort of dying speech of the commission: an effort from which I expect little success. . . . Everything is upon a great scale upon this continent. The rivers are immense; the climate violent in heat and cold; the prospect magnificent; the thunder and lightning tremendous. The disorders incident to the country make every constitution tremble. We have nothing on a great scale with us but our blunders, our misconduct, our ruin, our losses, our disgraces and misfortunes, that will mark the reign of a prince who deserves better treatment and kinder fortunes."

CHAPTER XLIX.

PREPARATIONS TO EVACUATE PHILADELPHIA.—WASHINGTON CALLS A COUNCIL OF WAR.—LEE OPPOSED TO ANY ATTACK.—PHILADELPHIA EVACUATED.—MOVEMENTS IN PURSUIT OF SIR HENRY CLINTON.—ANOTHER COUNCIL OF WAR.—CONFLICT OF OPINIONS.—CONTRADICTIONARY CONDUCT OF LEE RESPECTING THE COMMAND.—THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH COURT-HOUSE.—SUBSEQUENT MARCH OF THE ARMIES.

THE delay of the British to evacuate Philadelphia tasked the sagacity of Washington, but he supposed it to have been caused by the arrival of the commissioners from Great Britain. The force in the city in the meantime had been much reduced. Five thousand men had been detached to aid in a sudden de-

scent on the French possessions in the West Indies ; three thousand more to Florida. Most of the cavalry with other troops had been shipped with the provision train and heavy baggage to New York. The effective force remaining with Sir Henry was now about nine or ten thousand men ; that under Washington was a little more than twelve thousand Continentals, and about thirteen hundred militia. It had already acquired considerable proficiency in tactics and field manœuvring under the diligent instructions of Steuben.

Early in June, it was evident that a total evacuation of the city was on the point of taking place ; and circumstances convinced Washington that the march of the main body would be through the Jerseys. Some of his officers thought differently, especially General Lee, who had now the command of a division composed of Poor, Varnum, and Huntington's brigades. Lee, since his return to the army, had resumed somewhat of his old habit of cynical supervision, and had his circle of admirers, among whom he indulged in caustic comments on military affairs and the merits of commanders.

On the present occasion he addressed a letter to Washington, dated June 15th, suggesting other plans which the enemy might have in view. "Whether they do or do not adopt any of these plans," added he, "there can be no inconvenience arise from considering the subject, nor from devising means of defeating their purposes, on the supposition that they will."

Washington, in his reply, gave the suggestions of Lee a candid and respectful consideration, but in the course of his letter took occasion to hint a little gentle admonition.

"I shall always be happy," writes he, "in a free communication of your sentiments upon any important subject relative to the service, and only beg that they may come directly to myself. The custom which many officers have, of speaking freely, and reprobating measures, which, upon investigation, may be found to be unavoidable, is never found to be productive of good, but often of very mischievous consequences."

In consequence, probably, of the suggestions of Lee, Washington called a general council of war on the 17th, to consider what measures to adopt, whether to undertake any enterprise against the enemy in their present circumstances—whether the army should remain in its actual position, until the final evacuation had taken place, or move immediately toward the Delaware—whether, should the enemy march through the Jerseys, it would be advisable to attack them while on the way, or to push on directly to the Hudson, and secure that important communication between the Eastern and Southern States ? In

case an attack while on the march were determined on, should it be a partial or a general one ?

Lee spoke eloquently on the occasion. He was opposed to an attack of any kind. He would make a bridge of gold for the enemy. They were nearly equal in number to the Americans, and far superior in discipline ; in fact, never had troops been better disciplined. An attack would endanger the safety of the cause. It was now in a prosperous state, in consequence of the foreign alliance just formed ; all ought not to be put at risk at the very moment of making such an alliance. He advised merely to follow the enemy, observe their motions, and prevent them from committing any excesses.

Lee's opinions had still great weight with the army ; most of the officers, both foreign and American, concurred with him. Greene, Lafayette, Wayne, and Cadwalader, thought differently. They could not brook that the enemy should evacuate the city, and make a long march through the country unmolested. An opportunity might present itself, amid the bustle and confusion of departure, or while embarrassed in defiles with a cumbrous baggage train, of striking some signal blow, that would indemnify them for all they had suffered in their long and dreary encampment at Valley Forge.

Washington's heart was with this latter counsel ; but seeing such want of unanimity among his generals, he requested their opinions in writing. Before these were given in, word was brought that the enemy had actually evacuated the city.

Sir Henry had taken his measures with great secrecy and despatch. The army commenced moving at three o'clock on the morning of the 18th, retiring to a point of land below the town formed by the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill, and crossing the former river in boats. By ten o'clock in the morning the rear-guard landed on the Jersey shore.

On the first intelligence of this movement, Washington detached General Maxwell with his brigade, to coöperate with General Dickinson and the New Jersey militia in harassing the enemy on their march. He sent General Arnold, also, with a force to take command of Philadelphia, that officer being not yet sufficiently recovered from his wound for field service ; then breaking up his camp at Valley Forge, he pushed forward with his main force in pursuit of the enemy.

As the route of the latter lay along the eastern bank of the Delaware as high as Trenton, Washington was obliged to make a considerable circuit, so as to cross the river higher up at Coryell's Ferry, near the place where eighteen months previously he had crossed to attack the Hessians.

On the 20th, he writes to General Gates : "I am now with the main body of the army within ten miles of Coryell's Ferry. General Lee is advanced with six brigades, and will cross to-night or to-morrow morning. By the last intelligence the enemy are near Mount Holly, and moving very slowly ; but as there are so many roads open to them, their route could not be ascertained. I shall enter the Jerseys to-morrow, and give you the earliest notice of their movements, and whatever may affect you."

Heavy rains and sultry summer heat retarded his movements ; but the army crossed on the 24th. The British were now at Moorestown and Mount Holly. Thence they might take the road on the left for Brunswick, and so on to Staten Island and New York ; or the road to the right through Monmouth, by the Heights of Middletown to Sandy Hook. Uncertain which they might adopt, Washington detached Colonel Morgan with six hundred picked men to reinforce Maxwell, and hang on their rear ; while he himself pushed forward with the main body toward Princeton, cautiously keeping along the mountainous country to the left of the most northern road.

The march of Sir Henry was very slow. His army was encumbered with baggage and provisions, and all the nameless superfluities in which British officers are prone to indulge. His train of wheel carriages and bat horses was twelve miles in extent. He was retarded by heavy rain and intolerable heat ; bridges had to be built and causeways constructed over streams and marshes, where they had been destroyed by the Americans.

From his dilatory movements, Washington suspected Sir Henry of a design to draw him down into the level country, and then, by a rapid movement on his right, to gain possession of the strong ground above him, and bring him to a general action on disadvantageous terms. He himself was inclined for a general action whenever it could be made on suitable ground, he halted, therefore, at Hopewell, about five miles from Princeton, and held another council of war, while his troops were reposing and refreshing themselves. The result of it, writes his aide-de-camp, Colonel Hamilton, "would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives, and to them only."* The purport was to keep at a distance from the enemy, and annoy them by detachments. Lee, according to Hamilton, was the prime mover of this plan : in pursuance of which a detachment of fifteen hundred men was sent off under Brigadier-

* MS. letter of Hamilton to Elias Boudinot.

general Scott, to join the other troops near the enemy's line. Lee was even opposed to sending so large a number.

Generals Greene, Wayne, and Lafayette were in the minority in the council, and subsequently gave separately the same opinion in writing, that the rear of the enemy should be attacked by a strong detachment, while the main army should be so disposed as to give a general battle, should circumstances render it advisable. As this opinion coincided with his own, Washington determined to act upon it.

Sir Henry Clinton in the meantime had advanced to Allentown, on his way to Brunswick, to embark on the Raritan. Finding the passage of that river likely to be strongly disputed by the forces under Washington, and others advancing from the north under Gates, he changed his plan, and turned to the right by a road leading through Freehold to Navesink and Sandy Hook; to embark at the latter place.

Washington, no longer in doubt as to the route of the enemy's march, detached Wayne with one thousand men to join the advanced corps, which, thus augmented, was upward of four thousand strong. The command of the advance properly belonged to Lee as senior major-general; but it was eagerly solicited by Lafayette, as an attack by it was intended, and Lee was strenuously opposed to everything of the kind. Washington willingly gave his consent, provided General Lee were satisfied with the arrangement. The latter ceded the command without hesitation, observing to the marquis that he was well pleased to be freed from all responsibility in executing plans which he was sure would fail.

Lafayette set out on the 25th to form a junction as soon as possible with the force under General Scott; while Washington, leaving his baggage at Kingston, moved with the main body to Cranberry, three miles in the rear of the advanced corps, to be ready to support it.

Scarce, however, had Lee relinquished the command, when he changed his mind. In a note to Washington, he declared that, in assenting to the arrangement, he had considered the command of the detachment one more fitting a young volunteering general than a veteran like himself, second in command in the army. He now viewed it in a different light. Lafayette would be at the head of all the continental parties already in the line; six thousand men at least; a command next to that of the commander-in-chief. Should the detachment march, therefore, he entreated to have the command of it. So far he spoke personally, "but," added he, "to speak as an officer, I do not think that this detachment ought to march at all, until at

least the head of the enemy's right column has passed Cranberry; then if it is necessary to march the whole army, I cannot see any impropriety in the marquis' commanding this detachment, or a greater, as an advanced guard of the army; but if this detachment, with Maxwell's corps, Scott's, Morgan's, and Jackson's, is to be considered as a separate, chosen, active corps, and put under the marquis' command until the enemy leave the Jerseys, both myself and Lord Stirling will be disgraced."

Washington was perplexed how to satisfy Lee's punctilious claims without wounding the feelings of Lafayette. A change in the disposition of the enemy's line of march furnished an expedient. Sir Henry Clinton, finding himself harassed by light troops on the flanks, and in danger of an attack in the rear, placed all his baggage in front under the convoy of Knyphausen, while he threw the main strength of his army in the rear under Lord Cornwallis.

This made it necessary for Washington to strengthen his advanced corps; and he took this occasion to detach Lee, with Scott's and Varnum's brigades, to support the force under Lafayette. As Lee was the senior major-general, this gave him the command of the whole advance. Washington explained the matter in a letter to the marquis, who resigned the command to Lee when the latter joined him on the 27th. That evening the enemy encamped on high ground near Monmouth Courthouse. Lee encamped with the advance at Englishtown, about five miles distant. The main body was three miles in his rear.

About sunset Washington rode forward to the advance, and anxiously reconnoitered Sir Henry's position. It was protected by woods and morasses, and too strong to be attacked with a prospect of success. Should the enemy, however, proceed ten or twelve miles further unmolested, they would gain the heights of Middletown, and be on ground still more difficult. To prevent this, he resolved that an attack should be made on their rear early in the morning, as soon as their front should be in motion. This plan he communicated to General Lee, in presence of his officers, ordering him to make dispositions for the attack, keeping his troops lying on their arms, ready for action on the shortest notice; a disposition he intended to observe with his own troops. This done, he rode back to the main body.

Apprehensive that Sir Henry might decamp in the night, Washington sent orders to Lee before midnight, to detach six or seven hundred men to lie near the enemy, watch and give notice of their movements, and hold them in check when on the march, until the rest of the troops could come up. General Dick-

inson was charged by Lee with this duty. Morgan was likewise stationed with his corps to be ready for skirmishing.

Early in the morning, Washington received an express from Dickinson, informing him that the enemy were in motion. He instantly sent orders to Lee to push forward and attack them, unless there should be powerful reasons to the contrary, adding that he was coming on to support him. For that purpose he immediately set forward with his own troops, ordering them to throw by their knapsacks and blankets.

Knyphausen, with the British van-guard, had begun about daybreak to descend into the valley between Monmouth Court-house and Middletown. To give the long train of wagons and pack-horses time to get well on the way, Sir Henry Clinton with his choice troops remained in camp on the heights of Freehold until eight o'clock, when he likewise resumed the line of march toward Middletown.

In the meantime Lee, on hearing of the early movement of the enemy, had advanced with the brigades of Wayne and Maxwell, to support the light troops engaged in skirmishing. The difficulty of reconnoitering a country cut up by woods and morasses, and the perplexity occasioned by contradictory reports, embarrassed his movements. Being joined by Lafayette with the main body of the advance, he had now about four thousand men at his command, independent of those under Morgan and General Dickinson. Arriving on the heights of Freehold, and riding forward with General Wayne to an open place to reconnoiter, Lee caught sight of a force under march, but partly hidden from view by intervening woods. Supposing it to be a mere covering party of about two thousand men, he detached Wayne with seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery, to skirmish in its rear and hold it in check; while he, with the rest of his force, taking a shorter road through the woods, would get in front of it, and cut it off from the main body. He at the same time sent a message to Washington, apprising him of this movement and of his certainty of success.*

Washington in the meantime was on his march with the main body, to support the advance, as he had promised. The booming of cannon at a distance indicated that the attack so much desired had commenced, and caused him to quicken his march. Arrived near Freehold church, where the road forked, he detached Greene with part of his forces to the right, to flank the enemy in the rear of Monmouth Court-house, while he, with the rest of the column, would press forward by the other road.

* Evidence of Dr. McHenry on the Court-Martial.

Washington had alighted while giving these directions, and was standing with his arm thrown over his horse, when a countryman rode up and said the continental troops were retreating. Washington was provoked at what he considered a false alarm. The man pointed, as his authority, to an American fifer who just then came up in breathless affright. The fifer was ordered into custody to prevent his spreading an alarm among the troops who were advancing, and was threatened with a flogging should he repeat the story.

Springing on his horse, Washington had moved forward but a short distance when he met other fugitives, one in the garb of a soldier, who all concurred in the report. He now sent forward Colonels Fitzgerald and Harrison, to learn the truth, while he himself spurred past Freehold meeting-house. Between that edifice and the morass beyond it, he met Grayson's and Patton's regiments in most disorderly retreat, jaded with heat and fatigue. Riding up to the officer at their head, Washington demanded whether the whole advanced corps were retreating. The officer believed they were.

It seemed incredible. There had been scarce any firing—Washington had received no notice of the retreat from Lee. He was still almost inclined to doubt, when the heads of several columns of the advance began to appear. It was too evident—the whole advance was falling back on the main body, and no notice had been given to him. One of the first officers that came up was Colonel Shreve, at the head of his regiment; Washington, greatly surprised and alarmed, asked the meaning of this retreat. The colonel smiled significantly—he did not know—he had retreated by order. There had been no fighting excepting a slight skirmish with the enemy's cavalry, which had been repulsed.

A suspicion flashed across Washington's mind, of wrong-headed conduct on the part of Lee, to mar the plan of attack adopted contrary to his counsels. Ordering Colonel Shreve to march his men over the morass, halt them on the hill beyond and refresh them, he galloped forward to stop the retreat of the rest of the advance, his indignation kindling as he rode. At the rear of the regiment he met Major Howard; he, too, could give no reason for the retreat, but seemed provoked at it—declaring that he had never seen the like. Another officer exclaimed with an oath that they were flying from a shadow.

Arriving at a rising ground, Washington beheld Lee approaching with the residue of his command in full retreat. By this time he was thoroughly exasperated.

"What is the meaning of all this, sir?" demanded he, in the sternest and even fiercest tone, as Lee rode up to him.

Lee for a moment was disconcerted, and hesitated in making a reply, for Washington's aspect, according to Lafayette, was terrible.

"I desire to know the meaning of this disorder and confusion," was again demanded still more vehemently.

Lee, stung by the manner more than the words of the demand, made an angry reply, and provoked still sharper expressions, which have been variously reported. He attempted a hurried explanation. His troops had been thrown into confusion by contradictory intelligence; by disobedience of orders; by the meddling and blundering of individuals; and he had not felt disposed, he said, to beard the whole British army with troops in such a situation.

"I have certain information," rejoined Washington, "that it was merely a strong covering party."

"That may be, but it was stronger than mine, and I did not think proper to run such a risk."

"I am very sorry," replied Washington, "that you undertook the command, unless you meant to fight the enemy."

"I did not think it prudent to bring on a general engagement."

"Whatever your opinion may have been," replied Washington, disdainfully, "I expected my orders would have been obeyed."

This all passed rapidly, and, as it were, in flashes, for there was no time for parley. The enemy were within a quarter of an hour's march. Washington's appearance had stopped the retreat. The fortunes of the day were to be retrieved, if possible, by instant arrangements. These he proceeded to make with great celerity. The place was favorable for a stand; it was a rising ground, to which the enemy could approach only over a narrow causeway. The rallied troops were hastily formed upon this eminence. Colonels Stewart and Ramsey, with two batteries, were stationed in a covert of woods on their left, to protect them and keep the enemy at bay. Colonel Oswald was posted for the same purpose on a height, with two field-pieces. The promptness with which everything was done showed the effects of the Baron Steuben's discipline.

In the interim, Lee, being asked about the disposition of some of the troops, replied that he could give no orders in the matter, as he supposed General Washington intended he should have no further command.

Shortly after this, Washington, having made all his arrangements with great despatch, but admirable clearness and precision, rode back to Lee in calmer mood, and inquired, "Will

you retain the command on "this height or not? if you will, I will return to the main body, and have it formed on the next height."

"It is equal to me where I command," replied Lee.

"I expect you will take proper means for checking the enemy," rejoined Washington.

"Your orders shall be obeyed; and I shall not be the first to leave the ground," was the reply.

A warm cannonade by Oswald, Stewart, and Ramsey, had the desired effect. The enemy were brought to a stand, and Washington had time to gallop back and bring on the main body. This he formed on an eminence, with a wood in the rear and the morass in front. The left wing was commanded by Lord Stirling, who had with him a detachment of artillery and several field-pieces. General Greene was on his right.

Lee had maintained his advanced position with great spirit, but was at length obliged to retire. He brought off his troops in good order across a causeway which traversed the morass in front of Lord Stirling. As he had promised, he was the last to leave the ground. Having formed his men in a line, beyond the morass, he rode up to Washington. "Here, sir, are my troops," said he; "how is it your pleasure I should dispose of them?" Washington saw that the poor fellows were exhausted by marching, counter-marching, hard fighting, and the intolerable heat of the weather: he ordered Lee, therefore, to repair with them to the rear of Englishtown, and assemble there all the scattered fugitives he might meet with.

The batteries under the direction of Lord Stirling opened a brisk and well-sustained fire upon the enemy; who, finding themselves warmly opposed in front, attempted to turn the left flank of the Americans, but were driven back by detached parties of infantry stationed there. They then attempted the right; but here were met by General Greene, who had planted his artillery under Knox, on a commanding ground, and not only checked them but enfiladed those who were in front of the left wing. Wayne too, with an advanced party posted in an orchard, and partly sheltered by a barn, kept up a severe and well-directed fire upon the enemy's centre. Repeated attempts were made to dislodge him, but in vain. Colonel Monckton of the royal grenadiers, who had distinguished himself and been wounded in the battle of Long Island, now undertook to drive Wayne from his post at the point of the bayonet. Having made a brief harangue to his men, he led them on in column. Wayne's men reserved their fire, until Colonel Monckton, waving his sword, called out to his grenadiers to charge. At that

instant a sheeted volley laid him low, and made great slaughter in his column, which was again repulsed.

The enemy at length gave way, and fell back to the ground which Lee had occupied in the morning. Here their flanks were secured by woods and morasses, and their front could only be approached across a narrow causeway.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the position, Washington prepared to attack it; ordering General Poor with his own and the Carolina brigade, to move round upon their right, and General Woodford on their left; while the artillery should gall them in front. Before these orders could be carried into effect the day was at an end. Many of the soldiers had sunk upon the ground, overcome by fatigue and the heat of the weather; all needed repose. The troops, therefore, which had been in the advance, were ordered to lie on their arms on the ground they occupied, so as to be ready to make the attack by day-break. The main army did the same, on the field of action, to be at hand to support them. Washington lay on his cloak at the foot of a tree, with Lafayette beside him, talking over the strange conduct of Lee; whose disorderly retreat had come so near being fatal to the army.

It was indeed a matter of general perplexity, to which the wayward character of Lee greatly contributed. Some who recollected his previous opposition to all plan of attack, almost suspected him of willfully aiming to procure a defeat. It would appear, however, that he had been really surprised and thrown into confusion by a move of Sir Henry Clinton, who, seeing the force under Lee descending on his rear from Freehold heights, had suddenly turned upon it, aided by troops from Knyphausen's division, to oblige it to call to its assistance the flanking parties under Morgan and Dickinson, which were threatening his baggage train. So that Lee, instead of a mere covering party which he had expected to cut off, had found himself front to front with the whole rear division of the British army and that to, on unfavorable ground, with a deep ravine and a morass in his rear.

He endeavored to form his troops for action. Oswald's artillery began to play, and there was some skirmishing with the enemy's light horse, in which they were repulsed. But mistakes occurred; orders were misunderstood; one corps after another fell back, until the whole retreated, almost without a struggle, before an inferior force. Lee, himself, seemed to partake of the confusion; taking no pains to check the retrograde movement, nor to send notice of it to the main body upon which they were to fall back.

What opinions Washington gave on the subject, in the course of his conversation with the marquis, the latter does not tell us ; after it was ended, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and slept at the foot of the tree, among his soldiers.

At daybreak the drums beat the reveillé. The troops roused themselves from their heavy sleep, and prepared for action. To their surprise, the enemy had disappeared : there was a deserted camp, in which were found four officers and about forty privates, too severely wounded to be conveyed away by the retreating army. Sir Henry Clinton, it appeared, had allowed his wearied troops but short repose on the preceding night. At ten o'clock when the American forces were buried in their first sleep, he had set forward to join the division under Knyphausen, which, with the baggage train, having pushed on during the action, was far on the road to Middletown. So silent had been his retreat, that it was unheard by General Poor's advance party, which lay near by.

The distance to which the enemy must by this time have attained, the extreme heat of the weather, and the fatigued condition of the troops, deterred Washington from continuing a pursuit through a country where the roads were deep and sandy, and there was great scarcity of water. Besides, persons well acquainted with the country assured him that it would be impossible to annoy the enemy in their embarkation, as he must approach the place by a narrow passage, capable of being defended by a few men against his whole force. Detaching General Maxwell's brigade and Morgan's rifle corps, therefore, to hang on the rear of the enemy, prevent depredation and encourage desertions, he determined to shape his course with his main body by Brunswick toward the Hudson, lest Sir Henry should have any design upon the posts there.

The American loss in the recent battle was eight officers and sixty-one privates killed, and about one hundred and sixty wounded. Among the slain were Lieutenant-colonel Bonner of Pennsylvania, and Major Dickinson of Virginia, both greatly regretted.

The officers who had charge of the burying parties reported that they found two hundred and forty-five non-commissioned officers and privates, and four officers left dead by the enemy on the field of battle. There were fresh graves in the vicinity also, into which the enemy had hurried their slain before retreating. The number of prisoners, including those found wounded, was upwards of one hundred.

Some of the troops on both sides had perished in the morass, some were found on the border of a stream which ran through

it among alder bushes, whither, overcome by heat, fatigue, and thirst, they had crawled to drink and die.

Among the gallant slain of the enemy was Colonel Monckton, who fell so bravely when leading on his grenadiers. His remains were interred in the burial-ground of the Freehold meeting-house, upon a stone of which edifice his name is rudely cut.*

After giving his troops a day's repose Washington decamped on the 30th. His march lay through a country destitute of water, with deep, sandy roads wearying to the feet and reflecting the intolerable heat and glare of a July sun. Many of the troops, harassed by previous fatigue, gave out by the way. Some few died, and a number of horses were likewise lost. Washington, ever considerate of the health and comfort of his men, encamped near Brunswick on open, airy grounds, and gave them time to repose; while Lieutenant-colonel Aaron Burr, at that time a young and enterprising officer, was sent on a reconnoitering expedition, to learn the movements and intentions of the enemy. He was authorized to despatch trusty persons into New York to make observations, collect reports, and get newspapers. Others were to be sent to the heights of Bergen, Weehawk, and Hoboken, which command a view of the bay and river, to observe the situation of the enemy's forces, and note whether any movement among the shipping gave signs of an expedition up the Hudson; the immediate object of solicitude.

Sir Henry Clinton with the royal army had arrived at the Highlands of Navesink, in the neighborhood of Sandy Hook, on the 30th of June. He had lost many men by desertion, Hessians especially, during his march through the Jerseys, which, with his losses by killed, wounded, and captured, had diminished his army more than two thousand men. The storms of the preceding winter had cut off the peninsula of Sandy Hook from the main-land, and formed a deep channel between them. Fortunately the squadron of Lord Howe had arrived the day before, and was at anchor within the Hook. A bridge was immediately made across the channel with the boats of the ships, over which the army passed to the Hook on the 5th of July, and thence was distributed.

It was now encamped in three divisions on Staten Island, Long Island, and the Island of New York: apparently without any immediate design of offensive operations. There was a vigorous press in New York to man the large ships and fit them

* *Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution*, ii. 362.

for sea, but this was in consequence of a report that a French fleet had arrived on the coast.

Relieved by this intelligence from all apprehensions of an expedition by the enemy up the Hudson, Washington relaxed the speed of his movements, and halted for a few days at Paramus, sparing his troops as much as possible during the extreme summer heats.

CHAPTER L.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LEE AND WASHINGTON RELATIVE TO THE AFFAIR OF MONMOUTH.—LEE ASKS A TRIAL BY COURT-MARTIAL.—THE VERDICT.—LEE'S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.

HAVING brought the army to a halt we have time to notice a correspondence between General Lee and Washington immediately subsequent to the affair of Monmouth. The pride of the general had been deeply wounded by the rebuke he had received on the field of battle. On the following day (June 29th) he addressed a note to Washington on the subject. By mistake it was dated July 1st. "From the knowledge I have of your Excellency's character," writes he, "I must conclude that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of so very singular expressions as you did on my coming up to the ground where you had taken post. They implied that I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, want of conduct, or want of courage. Your Excellency will therefore infinitely oblige me by letting me know on which of these three articles you ground your charge. I ever had, and hope ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington. I think him endowed with many great and good qualities; but in this instance, I must pronounce that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice towards a man, who certainly has some pretensions to the regard of every servant of this country. And I think, sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed; and, unless I can obtain it, I must in justice to myself, when this campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from the service at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries. But at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat that I from my soul believe that it is not a motion of

your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs, who will forever insinuate themselves near persons high in office: for I really am convinced that when General Washington acts from himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice or indecorum."

The following was Washington's reply:—

"Sir,—I received your letter (dated through mistake the 1st of July), expressed as I conceive in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of making use of any very singular expressions at the time of meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said was dictated by duty and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will permit, you shall have an opportunity of justifying yourself to the army, to Congress, to America, and to the world in general: or of convincing them that you were guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehavior before the enemy on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat. I am," etc., etc.

To this Lee rejoined, in a note, misdated 28th June. "Sir, you cannot afford me greater pleasure than in giving me the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to offuscate the bright rays of truth. In the meantime, your Excellency can have no objection to my retiring from the army," etc.

Shortly after despatching this note, Lee addressed another to Washington. "I have reflected on both your situation and mine," writes he, "and beg leave to observe, that it will be for our mutual convenience that a court of inquiry should be immediately ordered: but I could wish that it might be a court-martial: for if the affair is drawn into length, it may be difficult to collect the necessary evidences, and perhaps might bring on a paper war betwixt the adherents to both parties, which may occasion some disagreeable feuds on the continent; for all are not my friends, nor all your admirers. I must entreat, therefore, from your love of justice, that you will immediately exhibit your charge, and that on the first halt I may be brought to a trial."

Washington in reply acknowledged the receipt of the two last notes, and added, "I have sent Colonel Scammel and the adjutant-general, to put you under arrest, who will deliver you a copy of the charges on which you will be tried,"

The following were the charges :

1st. Disobedience of orders, in not attacking the enemy on the 28th June, agreeably to repeated instructions.

2d. Misbehavior before the enemy on the same day, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

3d. Disrespect to the commander-in-chief in two letters, dated the 1st of July, and the 28th of June.

A court-martial was accordingly formed on the 4th of July, at Brunswick, the first halting-place. It was composed of one major-general, four brigadiers, and eight colonels, with Lord Stirling as president. It moved with the army, and convened subsequently at Paramus, Peekskill, and Northcastle, the trial lasting until the 12th of August. From the time it commenced, Washington never mentioned Lee's name when he could avoid it, and when he could not, he mentioned it without the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect.

Lee, on the contrary, indulged his natural irritability of temper and sharpness of tongue. When put on his guard against any intemperate railings against Washington, as calculated to injure his cause, he spurned at the advice. "No attack, it seems, can be made on General Washington but it must recoil on the assailant. I never entertained the most distant wish or intention of attacking General Washington. I have ever honored and respected him as a man and a citizen; but if the circle which surrounds him chooses to erect him into an infallible divinity, I shall certainly prove a heretic; and if, great as he is, he can attempt wounding everything I ought to hold dear, he must thank his priests if his deityship gets scratched in the scuffle."*

In the repeated sessions of the court-martial and the long examinations which took place, many of the unfavorable impressions first received, concerning the conduct and motives of Lee, were softened. Some of the officers in his detachment, who had made accusations against him to the commander-in-chief previous to the trial, especially Generals Wayne and Scott, were found not to have understood all the circumstances of the case in which he was placed in his encounter with the rear division of Sir Henry Clinton, and that that division had been largely reinforced by troops from General Knyphausen.

Lee defended himself with ability. He contended that after the troops had commenced to fall back, in consequence of a retrograde movement of General Scott, he had intended to form them on the first advantageous ground he could find, and that

* Letter to Joseph Reed. Sparks, *Biog. of Lee*, p. 174.

none such presented itself until he reached the place where he met General Washington; on which very place he had intended to make battle.

He denied that in the whole course of the day he had uttered the word retreat. "But this retreat," said he, "though necessary, was brought about contrary to my orders, contrary to my intention; and, if anything can deduct from my credit, it is, that I did not *order* a retreat which was so necessary." *

Judge Marshall observes of the variety of reasons given by Lee, in justification of his retreat, "if they do not absolutely establish its propriety, they give it so questionable a form, as to render it probable that a public examination never would have taken place, could his proud spirit have stooped to offer explanation instead of outrage to the commander-in-chief."

The result of the prolonged and tedious investigation was that he was found guilty of all the charges exhibited against him; the second charge, however, was softened by omitting the word *shameful*, and convicting him of making an "unnecessary and in some instances a disorderly retreat." He was sentenced to be suspended from all command for one year: the sentence to be approved or set aside by Congress.

We must again anticipate dates, to dispose briefly of the career of General Lee, who is not connected with subsequent events of the Revolution. Congress were more than three months in coming to a decision on the proceedings of the court-martial. As the House always sat with closed doors, the debates on the subject are unknown, but are said to have been warm. Lee urged for speedy action, and regretted that the people at large could not be admitted to form an audience, when the discussion was entered into of the justice or iniquity, wisdom or absurdity of the sentence that had been passed upon him. At length, on the 5th of December, the sentence was approved in a very thin session of Congress, fifteen members voting in the affirmative and seven in the negative.

From that time Lee was unmeasured in his abuse of Washington, and his reprobation of the court-martial, which he termed a "court of inquisition." He published a long article in the newspapers relative to the trial and to the affair at Monmouth, calculated to injure Washington. "I have neither the leisure nor inclination," observes the latter, "to enter the lists with him in a newspaper; and so far as his production points to personality, I can and do from my inmost soul despise it. . . . It became a part of General Lee's plan, from the

* Letter to Dr. Rush. Sparks, *Biog. of Lee*.

moment of his arrest, though it was an event solicited by himself, to have the world believe that he was a persecuted man, and party was at the bottom of it. But however convenient it may have been for his purposes to establish this belief, I defy him, or his most zealous partisans, to adduce a single instance in proof of it, unless bringing him to trial, at his own request, be considered in this light. I can do more; I will defy any person, out of my own family, to say, that I have ever mentioned his name, if it was to be avoided; and when not, that I have not studiously declined expressing any sentiment of him or his behavior. How far this conduct accords with his, let his own breast decide. . . . As I never entertained any jealousy of him, so neither did I ever do more than common civility and proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion. His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration: and, that I have escaped the venom of his tongue and pen so long, is more to be wondered at than applauded; as it is a favor of which no officer, under whose immediate command he ever served, has had the happiness, if happiness can be thus denominated, of boasting."*

Lee's aggressive tongue at length involved him in a quarrel with Colonel Laurens, one of Washington's aides, a high-spirited young gentleman, who felt himself bound to vindicate the honor of his chief. A duel took place, and Lee was wounded in the side.

Towards spring he retired to his estate in Berkley County in Virginia, "to learn to hoe tobacco, which," observes he with a sarcastic innuendo at Washington, "is the best school to form a consummate *General*. This is a discovery I have lately made."

He had led a kind of hermit life on his estate; dogs and horses were his favorite companions. His house is described as being a mere shell, destitute of comforts and conveniences. For want of partitions the different parts were designated by lines chalked on the floor. In one corner was his bed; in another were his books; his saddles and harness in a third; a fourth served as a kitchen.

"Sir," said he to the visitor, "it is the most convenient and economical establishment in the world. The lines of chalk which you see on the floor, mark the divisions of the apartments, and I can sit in any corner and overlook the whole without moving from my chair."

In this retirement he solaced his mortification and resent-

* Washington to Reed. Sparks, vol. vi. p. 133.

ment by exercising his caustic pen in "Queries Political and Military," intended to disparage the merits and conduct of Washington, and which were published in a Maryland newspaper. His attempts, it is needless to say, were fallacious, and only recoiled on his own head.

The term of his suspension had expired, when a rumor reached him that Congress intended to take away his commission. He was in bodily pain at the time; his horses were at the door for an excursion of business; the intelligence "ruffled his temper beyond all bounds." In his hurry and heat, without attempting to ascertain the truth of the report, he scrawled the following note to the President of Congress: "Sir, I understand that it is in contemplation of Congress, on the principle of economy, to strike me out of their service. Congress must know very little of me if they suppose that I would accept of their money, since the confirmation of the wicked and infamous sentence which was passed upon me. I am, sir," etc.

This insolent note occasioned his prompt dismissal from the service. He did not complain of it; but in a subsequent and respectful letter to the president, explained the mistaken information which had produced his note, and the state of body and mind in which it was written. "But, sir," added he, "I must entreat, in the acknowledging of the impropriety and indecorum of my conduct in this affair, it may not be supposed that I mean to court a restoration to the rank I held; so far from it, that I do assure you, had not the incident fallen out, I should have requested Congress to accept my resignation, as, for obvious reasons, whilst the army is continued in its present circumstances, I could not serve with safety and dignity," etc.

Though bitter in his enmities, Lee had his friendships, and was warm and constant in them as far as his capricious humors would allow. There was nothing crafty or mean in his character, nor do we think he ever engaged in the low intrigues of the cabal; but he was a disappointed and embittered man, and the gall of bitterness overflowed his generous qualities. In such a discordant state of feeling, he was not a man for the sweet solitude of the country. He became weary of his Virginia estate; though in one of the most fertile regions of the Shenandoah Valley: His farm was mismanaged; his agents were unfaithful; he entered into negotiations to dispose of his property, in the course of which he visited Philadelphia. On arriving there, he was taken with chills, followed by a fever, which went on increasing in violence, and terminated fatally. A soldier even unto the end, warlike scenes mingled with the delirium of his malady. In his dying moments he fancied him-

self on the field of battle. The last words he was heard to utter were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

He left a will and testament strongly marked by his peculiarities. There are bequests to intimates of horses, weapons, and sums to purchase rings of affection; ample and generous provisions for domestics, one of whom he styles his "old and faithful servant, or rather, humble friend." His landed estate in Berkley was to be divided into three equal parts, two of them between two of his former aides-de-camp, and the other third between two gentlemen to whom he felt under obligations. All his residuary property to go to his sister Sidney Lee and her heirs.

Eccentric to the last, one clause of his will regards his sepulture: "I desire most earnestly that I may not be buried in any church or churchyard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting-house; for, since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company while living, that I do not choose to continue it when dead."

This part of his will was not complied with. He was buried with military honors in the cemetery of Christ church; and his funeral was attended by the highest civic and military characters, and a large concourse of citizens.

The magnanimity exhibited by Washington in regard to Lee while living, continued after his death. He never spoke of him with asperity, but did justice to his merits, acknowledging that "he possessed many great qualities."

In after years, there was a proposition to publish the manuscripts of General Lee, and Washington was consulted in the matter, as there might be hostile articles among them which he might wish to have omitted. "I can have no request to make concerning the work," writes he in reply. "I never had a difference with that gentleman but on public grounds; and my conduct towards him on this occasion was such, only, as I felt myself indispensably bound to adopt in discharge of the public trust reposed in me. If this produced in him unfavorable sentiments of me, I can never consider the conduct I pursued, with respect to him, either wrong or improper, however I may regret that it may have been differently viewed by him, and that it excited his anger and animadversions. Should there appear in General Lee's writings anything injurious or unfriendly to me, the impartial and dispassionate world must decide how far I deserved it from the general tenor of my conduct."

CHAPTER LI.

ARRIVAL OF A FRENCH FLEET.—CORRESPONDENCE OF WASHINGTON AND THE COUNT D'ESTAING.—PLANS OF THE COUNT.—PERTURBATION AT NEW YORK.—EXCITEMENT IN THE FRENCH FLEET.—EXPEDITION AGAINST RHODE ISLAND.—OPERATIONS BY SEA AND LAND.—FAILURE OF THE EXPEDITION.—IRRITATION BETWEEN THE ALLIED FORCES.—CONSIDERATE LETTER OF WASHINGTON TO THE COUNT D'ESTAING.

WHILE encamped at Paramus, Washington, in the night of the 13th of July, received a letter from Congress informing him of the arrival of a French fleet on the coast; instructing him to concert measures with the commander, the Count D'Estaing, for offensive operations by sea and land, and empowering him to call on the States from New Hampshire to New Jersey inclusive, to aid with their militia.

The fleet in question was composed of twelve ships of the line and six frigates, with a land force of four thousand men. On board of it came Mons. Gerard, minister from France to the United States, and the Hon. Silas Deane, one of the American ministers who had effected the late treaty of alliance. The fleet had sailed from Toulon on the 13th of April. After struggling against adverse winds for eighty-seven or eighty-eight days, it had made its appearance off the northern extremity of the Virginia coast, and anchored at the mouth of the Delaware, on the eighth of July. Thence the count despatched a letter to Washington, dated at sea. "I have the honor of imparting to your Excellency," writes he, "the arrival of the king's fleet, charged by His Majesty with the glorious task of giving his allies, the United States of America, the most striking proofs of his affection. Nothing will be wanting to my happiness, if I can succeed in it. It is augmented by the consideration of concerting my operations with a general such as your Excellency. The talents and great actions of General Washington have insured him, in the eyes of all Europe, the truly sublime title of Deliverer of America," etc.

The count was unfortunate in the length of his voyage. Had he arrived in ordinary time, he might have entrapped Lord Howe's squadron in the river; coöperated with Washington in

investing the British army by sea and land, and, by cutting off its retreat to New York, compelled it to surrender.

Finding the enemy had evacuated both city and river, the count sent up the French minister and Mr. Deane to Philadelphia in a frigate, and then, putting to sea, continued along the coast. A little earlier, and he might have intercepted the squadron of Lord Howe on its way to New York. It had had but a very few days the advantage of him, and when he arrived with his fleet in the road outside of Sandy Hook, he descried the British ships quietly anchored inside of it.

A frank and cordial correspondence took place forthwith between the count and Washington, and a plan of action was concerted between them by the intervention of confidential officers; Washington's aides-de-camp, Laurens and Hamilton, boarding the fleet while off the Hook, and Major Chouin, a French officer of merit, repairing to the American head-quarters.

The first idea of the count was to enter at Sandy Hook, and capture or destroy the British fleet composed of six ships of the line, four fifty-gun ships, and a number of frigates and smaller vessels; should he succeed in this, which his greatly superior force rendered probable, he was to proceed against the city, with the coöperation of the American forces. To be at hand for such purpose, Washington crossed the Hudson, with his army, at King's Ferry, and encamped at White Plains about the 20th of July.

In the meantime New York was once more in a violent perturbation. "British seamen" says a writer of the times, "endured the mortification, for the first time, of seeing a British fleet blocked up and insulted in their own harbor, and the French flag flying triumphant without. And this was still more embittered and aggravated, by beholding every day vessels under English colors captured under their very eyes by the enemy."* The army responded to their feelings; many royalists of the city, too, hastened to offer their services as volunteers; there was, in short, a prodigious stir in every department military and naval.

On the other hand, the French officers and crews were in the highest state of excitement and exultation. The long low point of Sandy Hook was all that intervened between them and a splendid triumph, and they anticipated the glory of "delivering America from the English colors which they saw waving on the other side of a simple barrier of sand, upon so great a crowd of masts.†

* *Brit. Ann. Register*, for 1778, p. 229.

† Letter of the Count.

Several experienced American pilots and masters of vessels, however, who had accompanied Colonels Laurens and Hamilton on board of the fleet, declared that there was not sufficient depth of water on the bar to admit the safe passage of the largest ships, one of which carried 80 and another 90 guns; the attempt, therefore, was reluctantly abandoned; and the ships anchored about four miles off, near Shrewsbury on the Jersey coast, taking in provisions and water.

The enterprise which the American and French commanders deemed next worthy of a combined operation, was the recapture of Rhode Island proper, that is to say, the island which gives its name to the State, and which the enemy had made one of their military depots and strongholds. In anticipation of such an enterprise, Washington on the 17th of July wrote to General Sullivan, who commanded at Providence, ordering him to make the necessary preparations for a descent from the mainland upon the island, and authorizing him to call in reinforcements of New England militia. He subsequently sent to his aid the Marquis Lafayette with two brigades (Varnum's and Glover's). Quartermaster-general Greene also was detached for the service, being a native of the island, well acquainted with its localities, and having great influence among its inhabitants. Sullivan was instructed to form his whole force, Continental, State and militia, into two equal divisions, one to be commanded by Greene, the other by Lafayette.

On the 22d of July, the French fleet, having finished taking in its supplies, appeared again in full force off the bar at Sandy Hook. The British, who supposed they had only been waiting on the Shrewsbury coast for the high tides of the latter part of July, now prepared for a desperate conflict; and, indeed, had the French fleet been enabled to enter, it is difficult to conceive a more terrible and destructive struggle than would have ensued between these gallant and deadly rivals, with their powerful armaments brought side to side, and cramped up in so confined a field of action.

D'Estaing, however, had already determined his course. After a few demonstrations off the harbor, he stood away to the eastward, and on the 29th arrived off Point Judith, coming to anchor within five miles of Newport.

Rhode Island (proper), the object of this expedition, is about sixteen miles long, running deep into the great Narraganset Bay. Seaconnet Channel separates it on the east from the mainland, and on the west the main channel passes between it and Conanicut Island. The town of Newport is situated near the south end of the island, facing the west, with Conanicut

Island in front of it. It was protected by batteries and a small naval force. Here General Sir Robert Pigott, who commanded in the island, had his head-quarters. The force under him was about six thousand strong, variously posted about the island, some in works at the north end, but the greater part within strongly intrenched lines extending across the island, about three miles from the town. General Greene hastened from Providence on hearing of the arrival of the fleet of Count D'Estaing, and went on board of it at the anchorage to concert a plan of operations. Some questions of etiquette and precedence rose between them in settling the mode in which the attack was to be conducted. It was at length agreed that the fleet should force its way into the harbor at the same time that the Americans approached by land, and that the landing of the troops from the ships on the west side of the island should take place at the same time that the Americans should cross Seaconnet Channel, and land on the east side near the north end. This combined operation was to have been carried promptly into effect, but was postponed until the 10th of August, to give time for the reinforcements sent by Washington to arrive. The delay was fatal to the enterprise.

On the 8th, the Count D'Estaing entered the harbor and passed up the main channel, exchanging a cannonade with the batteries as he passed, and anchored a little above the town, between Goat and Conanicut Islands. The English, on his approach, burnt or scuttled three frigates and some smaller vessels, which would otherwise have been captured. General Sullivan, to be ready for the concerted attack, had moved down from Providence to the neighborhood of Howland's Ferry, on the east side of Seaconnet passage.

The British troops stationed opposite on the north end of the island, fearful of being cut off, evacuated their works in the night of the 8th, and drew into the lines at Newport.

Sullivan, seeing the works thus abandoned, could not resist the temptation to cross the channel in flat-bottomed boats on the morning of the 9th, and take possession of them.

This sudden movement, a day in advance of the concerted time, and without due notice given to the count, surprised and offended him, clashing with his notions of etiquette and punctilio. He, however, prepared to coöperate, and was ordering out his boats for the purpose, when, about two o'clock in the day, his attention was called to a great fleet of ships standing toward Newport. It was, in fact, the fleet of Lord Howe. That gallant nobleman had heard of the danger of Newport, and being reinforced by four stout ships, part of a squadron coming

out under Admirable Byron, had hastened to its relief; though still inferior in force to the French admiral. The delay of the concerted attack had enabled him to arrive in time. The wind set directly into the harbor. Had he entered promptly, the French would have been placed between two fires, from his ships and the batteries, and cramped up in a confined channel where their largest ships had no room to operate. His lordship, however, merely stood in near the land, communicated with General Pigott, and having informed himself exactly of the situation of the French fleet, came to anchor at Point Judith, some distance from the southwest entrance of the bay.

In the night the wind changed to the northeaest. The count hastened to avail himself of the error of the British admiral. Favored by the wind, he stood out of the harbor at eight o'clock in the morning to give the enemy battle where he should have good sea room, previously sending word to General Sullivan, who had advanced the preceding afternoon to Quaker Hill, about ten miles north of Newport, that he would land his promised troops and marines, and coöperate with him on his return.

The French ships were severely cannonaded as they passed the batteries, but without material damage. Forming in order of battle, they bore down upon the fleet of Lord Howe, confidently anticipating a victory from their superiority of force. The british ships slipt their cables at their approach, and likewise formed in line of battle; but his lordship avoided an encounter while the enemy had the weathergage. To gain this on the one part, and retain it on the other, the two fleets manœuvred throughout the day, standing to the southward, and gradually disappearing from the anxious eyes of the belligerent forces on Rhode Island.

The army of Sullivan, now left to itself before Newport, amounted to ten thousand men, having received the militia reinforcements. Lafayette advised the delay of hostile operations until the return of D'Estaing, but the American commander, piqued and chagrined at the departure of his allies, determined to commence the siege immediately, without waiting for his tardy aid. On the 12th, however, came on a tempest of wind and rain, which raged for two days and nights with unexampled violence. Tents were blown down; several soldiers and many horses perished, and a great part of the ammunition recently dealt out to the troops was destroyed. On the 14th, the weather cleared up and the sun shone brightly, but the army was worn down and dispirited. Had the British troops sallied forth at this juncture hale and fresh from com-

fortable quarters, it might have fared badly with their weather-beaten besiegers. The latter, however, being unmolested, had time to breathe and refit themselves. The day was passed in drying their clothes, cleaning their arms, and putting themselves in order for action. By the next morning they were again on the alert. Expecting the prompt return of the French, they now took post on Honeyman's Hill, about two miles from the British lines, and began to construct batteries, form lines of communication, and make regular approaches. The British were equally active in strengthening their defenses. There was casual cannonading on each side, but nothing of consequence. Several days elapsed without the reappearance of the French. The situation of the besiegers was growing critical, when, on the evening of the 19th, they descried the expected fleet standing toward the harbor. All now was exultation in the camp. Should the French with their ships and troops attack the town by sea and land on the one side, while the Americans assailed it on the other, the surrender of the place was inevitable.

These sanguine anticipations, however, were short-lived. The French fleet was in a shattered and forlorn condition. After sailing from before Newport, on the 20th, it had manœuvred for two days with the British fleet, each unwilling to enter into action without having the weathergage. While thus manœuvring, the same furious storm which had raged on shore separated and dispersed them with fearful ravage. Some single-encounters of scattered ships subsequently took place, but without definite result. All were too much tempest-tost and disabled to make good fight. Lord Howe with such of his ships as he could collect bore away to New York to refit, and the French admiral was now before Newport, but in no plight or mood for fighting.

In a letter to General Sullivan, he informed him that, pursuant to the orders of his sovereign and the advice of his officers, he was bound for Boston, being instructed to repair to that port, should he meet with misfortune, or a superior British force appear upon the coast.

Dismayed at this intelligence, which threatened ruin and disgrace to the enterprise, Sullivan wrote a letter of remonstrance to the count, and General Greene and the Marquis Lafayette repaired with it on board of the admiral's ship, to enforce it by their personal exertions. They represented to the count the certainty of carrying the place in two days, by a combined attack; and the discouragement and reproach that would follow a failure on this their first attempt at coöpera-

tion ; an attempt, too, for which the Americans had made such great and expensive preparations, and on which they had indulged such sanguine hopes. These and other considerations equally urgent had their weight with the count, and he was inclined to remain and pursue the enterprise, but was overruled by the principal officers of his fleet. The fact is, that he was properly a land officer, and they had been indignant at his having a nautical command over their heads. They were glad, therefore, of any opportunity to thwart and mortify him ; and now insisted on his complying with his letter of instructions, and sailing for Boston. On Lafayette's taking leave, the count assured him that he would only remain in Boston time enough to give his men repose after their long sufferings, and refit his ships ; and trusted to leave the port again within three weeks after entering it, "to fight for the glory of the French name and the interests of America."*

The marquis and General Greene returned at midnight, and made a report of the ill success of their mission. Sullivan sent another letter on the following day, urging D'Estaing in any event to leave his land forces. All the general officers, excepting Lafayette, joined in signing and sending a protest against the departure of the fleet to Boston, as derogatory to the honor of France, contrary to the intention of his most Christian Majesty and the interest of his nation, destructive of the welfare of the United States, and highly injurious to the alliance formed between the two nations. The fleet was already under way when Colonel Laurens got on board of the admiral's ship with the letter and protest. The count was deeply offended by the tone of the protest, and the manner in which it was conveyed to him. He declared to Colonel Laurens that "this paper imposed on the commander of the king's squadron the painful but necessary law of profound silence." He continued his course to Boston.

At the sailing of the ships there was a feeling of exasperation throughout the camp. Sullivan gave vent his vexation in a general order on the 24th, wherein he observed : "The general cannot help lamenting the sudden and unexpected departure of the French fleet, as he finds it has a tendency to discourage some who placed great dependence upon the assistance of it ; though he can by no means suppose the army, or any part of it, endangered by this movement. He yet hopes the event will prove America able to procure that by her own arms which her allies refuse to assist in obtaining."

* Letter of Lafayette to Washington. *Memoirs*, t. i. p. 194.

On cooler reflection he thought proper, in subsequent orders, to explain away the rash and unwarrantable imputation on French loyalty contained in the foregoing document, but a general feeling of irritation against the French continued to prevail in the army.

As had been foretold, the departure of the fleet was a death-blow to the enterprise. Between two and three thousand volunteers abandoned the camp in the course of four-and-twenty hours; others continued to go off; desertions occurred among the militia, and in a few days the number of besiegers did not exceed that of the besieged.

All thoughts of offensive operations were now at an end. The question was how best to extricate the army from its perilous position. The harbors of Rhode Island being now free, and open to the enemy, reinforcements might pour in from New York, and render the withdrawal of the troops disastrous, if not impossible. To prepare for rapid retreat, if necessary, all the heavy artillery that could be spared was sent off from the Island. On the 28th it was determined, in a council of war, to fall back to the military works at the north end of the island, and fortify there, until it should be known whether the French fleet would soon return to their assistance, the Marquis Lafayette setting off with all speed to have an interview with the Count D'Estaing, and ascertain the fact.

General Sullivan broke up his camp, and commenced his retreat that very night between nine and ten o'clock, the army retiring by two roads, the rear covered by parties of light troops, under Colonels Livingston and Laurens.

Their retreat was not discovered until daylight, when a pursuit was commenced. The covering parties behaved gallantly making frequent stands, abandoning one eminence only to take post on another, and keeping up a retreating fire that checked the advance of the enemy. After a series of skirmishes they were pressed back to the fortified grounds on the north end of the island; but Sullivan had already taken post there, on Batt's Hill, the main body of his army being drawn up in order of battle, with strong works in their rear, and a redoubt in front of the right wing.

The British now took post on an advantageous height called Quaker Hill, a little more than a mile from the American front, whence they commenced a cannonade which was briskly returned. Skirmishing ensued until about ten o'clock, when two British sloops-of-war and some small vessels having gained a favorable position, the enemy's troops, under cover of their fire, advanced in force to turn the right flank of the American

army, and capture the redoubt which protected it. This was bravely defended by General Greene: a sharp action ensued, which had nearly become a general one between two and three hundred men were killed on each side; the British at length drew back to their artillery and works on Quaker Hill, and a mutual cannonade was resumed and kept up until night.

On the following day (29th) the enemy continued his distant firing, but waited for reinforcements before coming to close quarters. In the meantime, General Sullivan had received intelligence that Lord Howe had again put to sea with the design, no doubt, to attempt the relief of Newport; and then followed another report that a fleet with troops was actually off Block Island, and must arrive almost immediately in the harbor.

Under these circumstances it was determined to abandon Rhode Island. To do so with safety, however, required the utmost caution, as the hostile sentries were within four hundred yards of each other, and any suspicious movements would be easily discovered and reported to the British commander. The position on Batt's Hill favored a deception. Tents were brought forward and pitched in sight of the enemy, and a great part of the troops employed throughout the day in throwing up works, as if the post was to be resolutely maintained; at the same time, the heavy baggage and stores were quietly conveyed away in the rear of the hill, and ferried across the bay. As soon as it was dark the tents were struck, fires were lighted at various points, the troops withdrawn, and in a few hours the whole were transported across the channel to the mainland. In the height of the transit, Lafayette arrived. He had ridden from the island to Boston, a distance of nearly seventy miles, in seven hours, and had conferred with the French admiral.

D'Estaing had convinced him of the inadequacy of his naval force, but had made a spirited offer of leading his troops by land to coöperate with the Americans. Eager to be in time for any engagement that might take place, Lafayette had spurred back still more speedily than he went, but was disappointed and mortified at finding all the fighting over. He arrived in time, however, to bring off the pickets and covering parties, amounting to a thousand men, which he did in such excellent order, that not a man was left behind, nor the smallest article lost.

The whole army had crossed by two o'clock in the morning unperceived by the enemy, and had reason to congratulate themselves on the course they had taken, and the quickness of their movements; for the very next day Sir Henry Clinton ar-

rived at Newport in a light squadron, with a reinforcement of four thousand men, a naval and land force that might effectually have cut off Sullivan's retreat had he lingered on the island.

Sir Henry, finding that he had arrived a day too late, returned to New York, but first detached Major-general Sir Charles Grey with the troops, on a ravaging expedition to the eastward; chiefly against ports which were the haunts of privateers. This was the same general that had surprised Wayne in the preceding year, and effected such slaughter among his men with the bayonet. He appears to have been fitted for rough and merciless warfare. In the course of his present expedition he destroyed more than seventy vessels in Acushnet River, some of them privateers with their prizes, others peaceful merchant ships. New Bedford and Fair Haven having been made military and naval depots, were laid waste, wharves demolished, rope-walks, store-houses and mills, with several private dwellings, wrapped in flames. Similar destruction was effected at the Island of Martha's Vineyard, a resort of privateers; where the inhabitants were disarmed, and a heavy contribution levied upon them in sheep and cattle. Having thus ravaged the coasts of New England, the squadron returned laden with inglorious spoil to New York.

Lord Howe, also, who had sailed for Boston, in the hope of intercepting the Count D'Estaing, and had reached there on the 30th of August, found the French fleet safely sheltered in Nantasket Road, and protected by American batteries erected on commanding points. He also returned to New York, and shortly afterward, availing himself of a permission granted him some time before by government, resigned the command of the fleet to Admiral Gambier, to hold it until the arrival of Admiral Byron. His lordship then returned to England, having rendered important services by his operations along the American coast and on the waters of the Delaware, and presenting a strong contrast, in his incessant activity, to the easy indolence and self-indulgence of his brother.

The failure of the combined enterprise against Rhode Island was a cause of universal chagrin and disappointment, but to none more so than to Washington, as is evident from the following passage of a letter to his brother, John Augustine:—

“An unfortunate storm, and some measures taken, in consequence of it by the French Admiral, blasted in one moment the fairest hopes that ever were conceived; and, from a moral certainty of success, rendered it a matter of rejoicing to get our own troops safe off the island. If the garrison of that place, consisting of nearly six thousand men, had been captured, as

there was in appearance at least, a hundred to one in favor of it, it would have given the finishing blow to British pretensions of sovereignty over this country; and would, I am persuaded, have hastened the departure of the troops in New York, as fast as their canvas wings would carry them away."

But what gave Washington the greatest solicitude, was the effect of this disappointment upon the public mind. The failure of the enterprise was generally attributed to the departure of the French fleet from Newport, and there was at one time such popular exasperation, that it was feared the means of repairing the French ships at Boston would be withheld. Count D'Estaing, and the other French officers, on their part, were irritated by the protests of the American officers, and the expressions in Sullivan's general order derogatory to French loyalty. The count addressed a letter to Congress, explaining and vindicating his conduct subsequent to his arrival on the coast.

Washington regarded this mutual irritation which had so suddenly sprung up between the army and the fleet, with the most poignant anxiety. He wrote to Sullivan and Greene on the subject, urging them to suppress the feuds and jealousies which had already arisen, to conceal as much as possible from the soldiery and public, the misunderstandings which had occurred between the officers of the two nations; to discountenance all illiberal or unfriendly observations on the part of the army, and to cultivate the utmost harmony and good-will.

Congress, also, endeavored to suppress the protest of the officers of Sullivan's army which had given so much offense; and, in a public resolution, expressed their perfect approbation of the conduct of the count, and their sense of his zeal and attachment.

Nothing perhaps tended more to soothe his wounded sensibilities, than a letter from Washington, couched in the most delicate and considerate language. "If the deepest regret, that the best concerted enterprise and bravest exertions should have been rendered fruitless by a disaster, which human prudence was incapable of foreseeing or preventing, can alleviate disappointment, you may be assured that the whole continent sympathizes with you. It will be a consolation for you to reflect, that the thinking part of mankind do not form their judgment from events; and that their equity will ever attach equal glory to those actions which deserve success, and those which have been crowned with it. It is in the trying circumstances to which your Excellency has been exposed, that the virtues of a great mind are displayed in their brightest lustre, and that a

general's character is better known than in the hour of victory. It was yours, by every title which can give it ; and the adverse element, which robbed you of your prize, can never deprive you of the glory due to you."

CHAPTER LII.

INDIAN WARFARE.—DESOLATION OF THE VALLEY OF WYOMING.—MOVEMENTS IN NEW YORK.—COUNTER-MOVEMENTS OF WASHINGTON.—FORAGING PARTIES OF THE ENEMY.—BAYLOR'S DRAGOONS MASSACRED AT OLD TAPPAN.—BRITISH EXPEDITION AGAINST LITTLE EGG HARBOR.—MASSACRE OF PULASKI'S INFANTRY.—RETALIATION OF DONOP'S RANGERS. ARRIVAL OF ADMIRAL BYRON.—ENDEAVORS TO ENTRAP D'ESTAING, BUT IS DISAPPOINTED.—EXPEDITION AGAINST ST. LUCIA.—EXPEDITION AGAINST GEORGIA.—CAPTURE OF SAVANNAH.—GEORGIA SUBDUED.—GENERAL LINCOLN SENT TO COMMAND IN THE SOUTH.

WHILE hostilities were carried on in the customary form along the Atlantic borders, Indian warfare, with all its atrocity, was going on in the interior. The British post at Niagara was its cradle. It was the common rallying place of tories, refugees, savage warriors, and other desperadoes of the frontiers. Hither Brant, the noted Indian chief, had retired after the repulse of St. Leger at Fort Schuyler, to plan further mischief ; and here was concerted the memorable incursion into the valley of Wyoming, suggested by tory refugees, who had until recently inhabited it.

The Valley of Wyoming is a beautiful region lying along the Susquehanna. Peaceful as was its aspect, it had been the scene of sanguinary feuds prior to the Revolution, between the people of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, who both laid claim to it. Seven rural forts or block-houses, situated on various parts of the valley, had been strongholds during these territorial contests, and remained as places of refuge for women and children in times of Indian ravage.

The expedition now set on foot against it, in June, was composed of Butler's rangers, Johnson's Royal Greens, and Brant, with his Indian Braves. Their united force, about eleven hundred strong, was conducted by Colonel John Butler, renowned in Indian warfare. Passing down the Chemung and Susquehanna in canoes, they landed at a place called Three Islands,

struck through the wilderness to a gap or "notch" of the mountains, by which they entered the Valley of Wyoming. Butler made his head-quarters at one of the strongholds already mentioned, called Wintermoot's Fort, from a tory family of the same name. Hence he sent out his marauding parties to plunder and lay waste the country.

Rumors of this intended invasion had reached the valley sometime before the appearance of the enemy, and had spread great consternation. Most of the sturdy yeomanry were absent in the army. A company of sixty men, enlisted under an act of Congress, and hastily and imperfectly organized, yet styling themselves regulars, took post at one of the strongholds called Forty Fort; where they were joined by about three hundred of the most efficient of the yeomanry, armed and equipped in rude rustic style. In this emergency old men and boys volunteered to meet the common danger, posting themselves in the smaller forts in which the women and children had taken refuge.

Colonel Zebulon Butler, an officer of the Continental Army, took the General command. Several officers arrived from the army, having obtained leave to repair home for the protection of their families. They brought word that a reinforcement, sent by Washington was on its way.

In the meantime the marauding parties sent out by Butler and Brant were spreading desolation through the valley; farm-houses were wrapped in flames; husbandmen were murdered while at work in the fields; all who had not taken refuge in the fort were threatened with destruction. What was to be done? Wait for the arrival of the promised reinforcement, or attempt to check the ravage? The latter was rashly determined on.

Leaving the women and children in Forty Fort, Colonel Zebulon Butler with his men sallied forth on the 3d of July, and made a rapid move upon Wintermoot Fort, hoping to come upon it by surprise. They found the enemy drawn up in front of it, in a line extending from the river to a marsh; Colonel John Butler and his rangers, with Johnson's Royal Greens, on the left; Indians and tories on the right.

The Americans formed a line of the same extent; the regulars under Colonel Butler on the right flank, resting on the river, the militia under Colonel Denison on the left wing, on the marsh. A sharp fire was opened from right to left; after a few volleys the enemy in front of Colonel Butler began to give way. The Indians, however, throwing themselves into the marsh, turned the left flank of the Americans, and attacked the militia in the rear. Denison, finding himself exposed to a

cross fire, sought to change his position, and gave the word to fall back. It was mistaken for an order to retreat. In an instant the left wing turned and fled; all attempts to rally it were vain; the panic extended to the right wing. The savages, throwing down their rifles, rushed on with tomahawk and scalping-knife, and a horrible massacre ensued. Some of the Americans escaped to Forty Fort, some swam the river; others broke their way across the swamp, and climbed the mountain: some few were taken prisoners; but the greater number were slaughtered.

The desolation of the valley was now completed; fields were laid waste, houses burnt, and their inhabitants murdered. According to the British accounts, upwards of four hundred of the yeomanry of Wyoming were slain, but the women and children were spared, "and desired to retire to their rebel friends." *

Upwards of five thousand persons, says the same account, fled in the utmost distress and consternation, seeking refuge in the settlements on the Lehigh and the Delaware. After completing this horrible work of devastation, the enemy retired before the arrival of the troops detached by Washington.

We might have swelled our narrative of this affair by many individual acts of atrocity committed by royalists on their old friends and neighbors, and even their near relatives; but we forbear to darken our page by such stigmas on human nature. Suffice it to say, it was one of the most atrocious outrages perpetrated throughout the war; and, as usual, the tories concerned in it were the most vindictive and merciless of the savage crew. Of the measures taken in consequence we shall speak hereafter.

For a great part of the summer, Washington had remained encamped at White Plains, watching the movements of the enemy at New York. Early in September he observed a great stir of preparation; cannon and military stores were embarked, and a fleet of one hundred and forty transports were ready to make sail. What was their destination? Washington explored the facility possessed by the enemy of transporting their troops from point to point by sea. "Their rapid movements," said he, "enable them to give us solicitude for the safety of remote points, to succor which we should have to make ruinous marches, and after all, perhaps, find ourselves the dupes of a feint."

There were but two capital objects which they could have in view, beside the defeat and dispersion of his army. One was

* *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1778, p. 545.

to get possession of the forts and passes of the Highlands; the other, by a junction of their land and naval forces, to attempt the destruction of the French fleet at Boston, and regain possession of that town. These points were so far asunder, that it was difficult to protect the one without leaving the other exposed. To do the best that the nature of the case would admit, Washington strengthened the works and reinforced the garrison in the Highlands, stationed Putnam with two brigades in the neighborhood of West Point. General Gates was sent with three brigades to Danbury in Connecticut, where he was joined by two brigades under General McDougall, while Washington moved his camp to a rear position at Fredericksburg on the borders of Connecticut, and about thirty miles from West Point, so as to be ready for a movement to the eastward or a speedy junction for the defense of the Hudson. To facilitate an eastern movement, he took measures to have all the roads leading to Boston repaired.

Scarcely had Washington moved from White Plains, when Sir Henry Clinton threw a detachment of five thousand men under Lord Cornwallis into the Jerseys, between the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers, and another of three thousand under Knyphausen into Westchester County, between the Hudson and the Bronx. These detachments held communication with each other, and by the aid of flat-bottomed boats could unite their forces, in twenty-four hours, on either side of the Hudson.

Washington considered these mere foraging expeditions, though on a large scale, and detached troops into the Jerseys, to cooperate with the militia in checking them; but, as something more might be intended, he ordered General Putnam to cross the river to West Point, for its immediate security: while he himself moved with a division of his army to Fishkill.

Wayne, who was with the detachment in the Jerseys, took post with a body of militia and a regiment of light horse in front of the division of Lord Cornwallis. The militia were quartered at the village of New Tappan; but Lieutenant-colonel Baylor, who commanded the light horse, chose to encamp apart, to be free, as is supposed, from the control of Wayne. He took up his quarters, therefore, in Old Tappan, where his men lay very negligently and unguardedly in barns. Cornwallis had intelligence of their exposed situation, and laid a plan to cut off the whole detachment. A body of troops from Knyphausen's division was to cross the Hudson in the night, and come by surprise upon the militia in New Tappan: at the same time, Major-general Grey, of marauding renown, was to advance on the left, and attack Baylor and his dragoons in their careless quarters in Old Tappan.

Fortunately Knyphausen's troops, led by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, were slow in crossing the river, and the militia were apprised by deserters of their danger in time to escape. Not so with Baylor's party. General Grey having cut off a sergeant's patrol, advanced in silence, and surrounded with his troops three barns in which the dragoons were sleeping. We have seen, in his surprise of Wayne's detachment in the preceding years, how stealthy and effective he was in the work of destruction. To prevent noise he had caused his men to draw the charges and take the flints from their guns, and fix their bayonets. The bayonet was his favorite weapon. With this his men rushed forward, and, deaf for a time to all cries for mercy, made a savage slaughter of naked and defenseless men. Eleven were killed on the spot, and twenty-five mangled, with repeated thrusts, some receiving ten, twelve, and even sixteen wounds. Among the wounded were Colonel Baylor and Major Clough, the last of whom soon died. About forty were taken prisoners, mostly through the humane interposition of one of Grey's captains, whose feelings revolted at the orders of his sanguinary commander.

This whole movement of troops, on both sides of the Hudson, was designed to cover an expedition against Little Egg Harbor, on the east coast of New Jersey, a noted rendezvous of American privateers. It was conducted in much the same spirit with that of General Grey to the eastward. Three hundred regular troops, and a body of royalist volunteers from the Jerseys, headed by Captain Patrick Ferguson, embarked at New York on board galleys and transports, and made for Little Egg Harbor under convoy of vessels of war. They were long at sea. The country heard of their coming; four privateers put to sea and escaped; others took refuge up the river. The wind prevented the transports from entering. The troops embarked in row galleys and small craft, and pushed twenty miles up the river to the village of Chestnut Neck. Here were batteries, without guns, prize ships which had been hastily scuttled, and store-houses for the reception of prize goods. The batteries and store-houses were demolished, the prize ships burnt, salt-works destroyed and private dwellings sacked and laid in ashes; all, it was pretended, being the property of persons concerned in privateering, or "whose activity in the cause of America and unrelenting persecution of the loyalists, marked them out as the proper objects of vengeance." As those persons were pointed out by the tory volunteers of New Jersey who accompanied the expedition, we may suppose how far private pique and neighborly feud entered into these proscriptions.

The vessels which brought this detachment being wind-bound for several days, Captain Ferguson had time for another enterprise. Among the forces detached by Washington into the Jerseys to check these ravages, was the Count Pulaski's legionary corps, composed of three companies of foot, and a troop of horse, officered principally by foreigners. A deserter from the corps brought word to the British commander that the legion was cantoned about twelve miles up the river; the infantry in three houses by themselves; Count Pulaski with the cavalry at some distance apart.

Informed of these circumstances, Captain Ferguson embarked in boats with two hundred and fifty men, ascended the river in the night, landed at four in the morning, and surrounded the houses in which the infantry were sleeping. "It being a night attack," says the captain in his official report, "little quarter of course could be given, *so there were only five prisoners.*" It was indeed a massacre similar to those of the bayonet-loving General Grey. Fifty of the infantry were butchered on the spot; among whom were two of the foreign officers, the Baron de Bose and Lieutenant de la Broderie.

The clattering of hoofs gave note of the approach of Pulaski and his horse, whereupon the British made a rapid retreat to their boats and pulled down the river, and thus ended the marauding expedition of Captain Ferguson, worthy of the times of the buccaneers. He attempted afterwards to excuse his wanton butchery of unarmed men, by alleging that the deserter from Pulaski's legion told him the count, in his general orders, forbade all granting of quarters; information which proved to be false, and which, had he been a gentleman of honorable spirit, he never would have believed, especially on the word of a deserter.

The detachment on the east side of the Hudson likewise made a predatory and disgraceful foray from their lines at King's Bridge, toward the American encampment at White Plains, plundering the inhabitants without discrimination, not only of their provisions and forage, but of the very clothes on their backs. None were more efficient in this ravage than a party of about one hundred of Captain Donop's Hessian yagers, and they were in full maraud between Tarrytown and Dobb's Ferry, when a detachment of infantry under Colonel Richard Butler, and of cavalry under Major Henry Lee, came upon them by surprise, killed ten of them on the spot, captured a lieutenant and eighteen privates, and would have taken or destroyed the whole, had not the extreme roughness of the country impeded the action of the cavalry, and enabled the yagers to escape by

scrambling up hillsides or plunging into ravines. This occurred but three days after the massacre of Colonel Baylor's party, on the opposite side of the Hudson.

The British detachments having accomplished the main objects of their movements, returned to New York, leaving those parts of the country they had harassed still more determined in their hostility, having achieved nothing but what is least honorable and most detestable in warfare. We need no better comment on these measures than one furnished by a British writer of the day. "Upon the whole," observes he, "even if the treaty between France and America had not rendered all hope of success from the present conciliatory system hopeless, these predatory and irritating expeditions would have appeared peculiarly ill-timed and unlucky. Though strongly and warmly recommended by many here as the most effectual mode of war, we scarcely remember an instance in which they have not been more mischievous than useful to the grand objects of either reducing or reconciling the provinces." *

We may add here that General Grey, who had most signalized himself in these sanguinary exploits, and who from his stealthy precaution to insure the use of the bayonet, had acquired the surname of "No Flint," was rewarded for a long career of military services by being raised to the peerage as Lord Grey of Howick, ultimately Earl Grey. He was father of the celebrated prime minister of that name.

About the middle of September Admiral Byron arrived at New York with the residue of the scattered armament, which had sailed from England in June to counteract the designs of the Count D'Estaing. Finding that the count was still repairing his shattered fleet in the harbor of Boston, he put to sea again as soon as his ships were refitted, and set sail for that port to entrap him. Success seemed likely to crown his schemes: he arrived off Boston on the 1st of November: his rival was still in port. Scarce had the admiral entered the bay, however, when another violent storm drove him out to sea, disabled his ships, and compelled him to put into Rhode Island to refit. Meanwhile the count having his ships in good order, and finding the coast clear, put to sea, and made the best of his way for the West Indies. Previous to his departure he issued a proclamation dated the 28th of October, addressed to the French inhabitants of Canada, inviting them to resume allegiance to their former sovereign. This was a measure in which he was not authorized by instructions from his government, and which

* *Ann. Register*, 1778, p. 215.

was calculated to awaken a jealousy in the American mind as to the ultimate views of France in taking a part in this contest. It added to the chagrin occasioned by the failure of the expedition against Rhode Island, and the complete abandonment by the French of the coasts of the United States.

The force at New York, which had been an object of watchful solicitude, was gradually dispersed in different directions. Immediately after the departure of Admiral Byron for Boston, another naval expedition had been set on foot by Sir Henry Clinton. All being ready, a fleet of transports with five thousand men, under General Grant, convoyed by Commodore Hotham with a squadron of six ships of war, set sail on the third of November, with the secret design of an attack on St. Lucia.

Towards the end of the same month, another body of troops, under Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, sailed for Georgia in the squadron of Commodore Hyde Parker, the British cabinet having determined to carry the war into the Southern States. At the same time General Prevost, who commanded in Florida, was ordered by Sir Henry Clinton to march to the banks of the Savannah River, and attack Georgia in flank, while the expedition under Campbell should attack it in front on the seaboard. We will briefly note the issue of these enterprises, so far beyond Washington's control.

The squadron of Commodore Hyde Parker anchored in the Savannah River towards the end of December. An American force of about six hundred regulars, and a few militia, under General Robert Howe, were encamped near the town, being the remnant of an army with which that officer had invaded Florida in the preceding summer, but had been obliged to evacuate it by a mortal malady which desolated his camp.

Lieutenant-colonel Campbell landed his troops on the 29th of December, about three miles below the town. The whole country bordering the river is a deep morass, cut up by creeks, and only to be traversed by causeways. Over one of these, six hundred yards in length, with a ditch on each side, Colonel Campbell advanced, putting to flight a small party stationed to guard it. General Howe had posted his little army on the main road with the river on his left and a morass in front. A negro gave Campbell information of a path leading through the morass, by which troops might get unobserved to the rear of the Americans. Sir James Baird was detached with the light infantry by this path, while Colonel Campbell advanced in front. The Americans, thus suddenly attacked in front and rear, were completely routed; upwards of one hundred were

either killed on the spot, or perished in the morass; thirty-eight officers and four hundred and fifteen privates were taken prisoners, and the rest retreated up the Savannah River and crossed into South Carolina. Savannah, the capital of Georgia, was taken possession of by the victors, with cannon, military stores, and provisions; their loss was only seven killed and nineteen wounded.

Colonel Campbell conducted himself with great moderation; protecting the persons and property of the inhabitants, and proclaiming security and favor to all that should return to their allegiance. Numbers in consequence flocked to the British standard; the lower part of Georgia was considered as subdued, and posts were established by the British to maintain possession.

While Colonel Campbell had thus invaded Georgia in front, General Prevost, who commanded the British forces in Florida, had received orders from Sir Henry Clinton to take it in flank. He accordingly traversed deserts to its southern frontier, took Sunbury, the only remaining fort of importance, and marched to Savannah, where he assumed the general command, detaching Colonel Campbell against Augusta. By the middle of January (1779) all Georgia was reduced to submission.

A more experienced American general than Howe had by this time arrived to take command of the Southern Department—Major-general Lincoln, who had gained such reputation in the campaign against Burgoyne, and whose appointment to this station had been solicited by the delegates from South Carolina and Georgia. He had received his orders from Washington in the beginning of October. Of his operations at the South we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

CHAPTER LIII.

WINTER CANTONMENTS OF THE AMERICAN ARMY.—WASHINGTON AT MIDDLEBROOK.—PLAN OF ALARM SIGNALS FOR THE JERSEYS.—LAFAYETTE'S PROJECT FOR AN INVASION OF CANADA.—FAVORED BY CONGRESS.—CONDEMNED BY WASHINGTON.—RELINQUISHED.—WASHINGTON IN PHILADELPHIA.—THE WAR SPIRIT DECLINING.—DISSENSIONS IN CONGRESS.—SECTIONAL FEELINGS.—PATRIOTIC APPEALS OF WASHINGTON.—PLANS FOR THE NEXT CAMPAIGN.—INDIAN ATROCITIES TO BE REPRESSED.—AVENGING EXPEDITION SET ON FOOT.—DISCONTENTS OF THE JERSEY TROOPS.—APPEASED BY THE INTERFERENCE OF WASHINGTON.—SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE INDIANS.

ABOUT the beginning of December, Washington distributed his troops for the winter in a line of strong cantonments extending from Long Island Sound to the Delaware. General Putnam commanded at Danbury, General McDougall in the Highlands, while the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief were near Middlebrook in the Jerseys. The objects of this arrangement were the protection of the country, the security of the important posts on the Hudson. and the safety, discipline, and easy subsistence of the army.

In the course of this winter he devised a plan of alarm signals, which General Philemon Dickinson was employed to carry into effect. On Bottle Hill, which commanded a vast map of country, sentinels kept watch day and night. Should there be an irruption of the enemy, an eighteen-pounder, called the Old Sow, fired every half hour, gave the alarm in the day-time or in dark and stormy nights; an immense fire or beacon at other times. On the booming of that heavy gun lights sprang up from hill to hill along the different ranges of heights; the country was aroused, and the yeomanry, hastily armed, hurried to their gathering places.

Washington was now doomed to experience great loss in the narrow circle of those about him, on whose attachment and devotion he could place implicit reliance. The Marquis Lafayette, seeing no immediate prospect of active employment in the United States, and anticipating a war on the continent of Europe, was disposed to return to France to offer his services to his sovereign; desirous, however, of preserving a relation

with America, he merely solicited from Congress the liberty of going home for the next winter : engaging himself not to depart until certain that the campaign was over. Washington backed his application for a furlough, as an arrangement that would still link him with the service ; expressing his reluctance to part with an officer who united "to all the military fire of youth an uncommon maturity of judgment." Congress in consequence granted the marquis an unlimited leave of absence, to return to America whenever he should find it convenient.

The marquis, in truth, was full of a grand project for the following summer's campaign, which he was anxious to lay before the cabinet of Versailles ; it was to effect the conquest of Canada by the combined forces, naval and military, of France and the United States. Of course it embraced a wide scope of operations. One body of American troops was to be directed against Detroit ; another against Niagara ; a third was to seize Oswego, launch a flotilla, and get command of Lake Ontario ; and a fourth to penetrate Canada by the river St. Francis, and secure Montreal and the posts on Lake Champlain. While the Americans thus invaded Upper Canada, a French fleet with five thousand men was to ascend the St. Lawrence, and make an attack on Quebec. The scheme met the approbation of a great majority in Congress, who ordered it to be communicated to Dr. Franklin, then minister at Paris, to be laid by him before the French cabinet. Previous to a final determination, the House prudently consulted the opinion of the commander-in-chief. Washington opposed the scheme, both by letter and in a personal interview, with Congress, as too complicated and extensive, and requiring too great resources in men and money to be undertaken with a prospect of success. He opposed it also on political grounds. Though it had apparently originated in a proposition of the Marquis Lafayette, it might have had its birth in the French cabinet, with a view to some ulterior object. He suggested the danger of introducing a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of a province attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connection of government. "Let us realize for a moment," said he, "the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada ; an extensive territory, abounding in supplies for the use of her islands ; a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize ; ports of her own on this continent independent of the precarious good-will of an ally ; the whole trade of Newfoundland whenever she pleased to engross it, the finest nursery for

seamen in the world ; and finally, the facility of awing and controlling these States, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe." All these advantages he feared might prove too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy ; and, with all his confidence in the favorable sentiments of France, he did not think it politic to subject her disinterestedness to such a trial. "To waive every other consideration," said he, grandly, in the conclusion of a letter to the President of Congress, "I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish, as much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable."

The strenuous and far-seeing opposition of Washington was at length effectual : and the magnificent, but hazardous scheme, was entirely, though slowly and reluctantly abandoned. It appears since, that the cabinet of France had really no hand either in originating or promoting it ; but, on the contrary, was opposed to any expedition against Canada ; and the instructions to their minister forbade him to aid in any such scheme of conquest.

Much of the winter was passed by Washington in Philadelphia, occupied in devising and discussing plans for the campaign of 1779. It was an anxious moment with him. Circumstances which inspired others with confidence, filled him with solicitude. The alliance with France had produced a baneful feeling of security, which, it appeared to him, was paralyzing the energies of the country. England, it was thought, would now be too much occupied in securing her position in Europe, to increase her force or extend her operations in America. Many, therefore, considered the war as virtually at an end ; and were unwilling to make the sacrifices, or supply the means necessary for important military undertakings.

Dissensions, too, and party feuds were breaking out in Congress, owing to the relaxation of that external pressure of a common and imminent danger, which had heretofore produced a unity of sentiment and action. That august body had, in fact, greatly deteriorated since the commencement of the war. Many of those whose names had been as watchwords at the Declaration of Independence, had withdrawn from the national councils ; occupied either by their individual affairs or by the affairs of their individual States. Washington, whose comprehensive patriotism embraced the whole Union, deprecated and deplored the dawning

of this sectional spirit. America, he declared, had never stood in more imminent need of the wise, patriotic, and spirited exertions of her sons than at this period. The states, separately, were too much engaged in their local concerns, and had withdrawn too many of their ablest men from the general council, for the good of the common weal. "Our political system," observed he, "is like the mechanism of a clock; it is useless to keep the smaller wheels in order, if the greater one, the prime mover of the whole, is neglected." It was his wish, therefore, that each State should not only choose, but absolutely compel its ablest men to attend Congress, instructed to investigate and reform public abuses.

Nothing can exceed his appeal to the patriotism of his native State, Virginia, in a letter to Colonel Harrison, the speaker of its House of Delegates, written on the 30th of December: "Our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been since the commencement of the war. By a faithful laborer, then, in the cause; by a man who is daily injuring his private estate without the smallest earthly advantage, not common to all in case of a favorable issue to the dispute; by one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly, but sees it, or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin; you are besought most earnestly, my dear Colonel Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your country, by sending your best and ablest men to Congress. These characters must not slumber nor sleep at home in such a time of pressing danger. They must not content themselves with the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own state, while the common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable ruin. . . . If I were to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, heard, and in part know, I should in one word say, that idleness, dissipation, and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, speculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches, seem to have got the better of every other consideration, and almost of every order of men; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day; while the momentous concerns of an empire, a great and accumulating debt, ruined finances, depreciated money, and want of credit, which in its consequences is the want of everything, are but secondary considerations, and postponed from day to day, from week to week, as if our affairs wore the most promising aspect. . . . In the present situation of things, I cannot help asking where are Mason, Wythe, Jefferson, Nicholas, Pendleton, Nelson, and another I could name? And

why, if you are sufficiently impressed with your danger, do you not, as New York has done in the case of Mr. Jay, send an extra member or two, for at least a limited time, till the great business of the nation is put upon a more respectable and happy establishment? . . . I confess to you I feel more real distress on account of the present appearance of things, than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute."

Nothing seems to have disgusted him more during his visit to Philadelphia, than the manner in which the concerns of the patriot camp were forgotten amid the revelry of the capital. "An assembly, a concert, a dinner, a supper, that will cost three or four hundred pounds, will not only take off men from acting in this business, but even from thinking of it; while a great part of the officers of our army, from absolute necessity, are quitting the service, and the more virtuous few, rather than do this, are sinking by sure degrees into beggary and want."

In discussing the policy to be observed in the next campaign, Washington presumed the enemy would maintain their present posts, and conduct the war as heretofore; in which case he was for remaining entirely on the defensive; with the exception of such minor operations as might be necessary to check the ravages of the Indians. The country, he observed, was in a languid and exhausted state, and had need of repose. The interruption to agricultural pursuits, and the many hands abstracted from husbandry by military service, had produced a scarcity of bread and forage, and rendered it difficult to subsist large armies. Neither was it easy to recruit these armies. There was abundance of employment; wages were high, the value of money was low; consequently there was but little temptation to enlist. Plans had been adopted to remedy the deranged state of the currency, but they would be slow in operation. Great economy must in the meantime be observed in the public expenditure.

The participation of France in the war, also, and the prospect that Spain would soon be embroiled with England, must certainly divide the attention of the enemy, and allow America a breathing time, these and similar considerations were urged by Washington in favor of a defensive policy. One single exception was made by him. The horrible ravages and massacres perpetrated by the Indians and their tory allies at Wyoming, had been followed by similar atrocities at Cherry Valley, in the State of New York, and called for signal vengeance to prevent a repetition. Washington knew by experience that

Indian warfare, to be effective, should never be merely defensive, but must be carried into the enemy's country. The Six Nations, the most civilized of the savage tribes, had proved themselves the most formidable. His idea was to make war upon them in their own style; penetrate their country, lay waste their villages and settlements, and at the same time destroy the British post at Niagara, that nestling place of Tories and refugees.

The policy thus recommended was adopted by Congress. An expedition was set on foot to carry that part relative to the Indians into execution: but here a circumstance occurred which Washington declared gave him more pain than anything that had happened in the war. A Jersey brigade being ordered to march, the officers of the first regiment hesitated to obey. By the depreciation of paper money, their pay was incompetent to their support; it was, in fact, merely nominal; the consequence was, as they alleged, that they were loaded with debt, and their families at home were starving; yet the Legislature of their State turned a deaf ear to their complaint. Thus aggrieved, they addressed a remonstrance to the Legislature on the subject of their pay, intimating that, should it not receive the immediate attention of that body, they might, at the expiration of three days, be considered as having resigned, and other officers might be appointed in their place.

Here was one of the many dilemmas which called for the judgment, moderation, and great personal weight and influence of Washington. He was eminently the soldier's friend, but he was no less thoroughly the patriot general. He knew and felt the privations and distresses of the army, and the truth of the grievances complained of; but he saw, also, the evil consequences that might result from such a course as that which the officers had adopted. Acting, therefore, as a mediator, he corroborated the statements of the complainants on the one hand, urging on government the necessity of a more general and adequate provision for the officers of the army, and the danger of subjecting them to too severe and continued privations. On the other hand, he represented to the officers the difficulties with which government itself had to contend from a deranged currency and exhausted resources; and the unavoidable delays that consequently impeded its moneyed operations. He called upon them, therefore, for a further exertion of that patience and perseverance which had hitherto done them the highest honor at home and abroad, had inspired him with unlimited confidence in their virtue, and consoled him amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune to which the national affairs had been ex-

posed. "Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view," observed he, "anything like a change of conduct would imply a very unhappy change of principle, and a forgetfulness, as well of what we owe to ourselves, as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this could be the case even in a single regiment of the army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honor, which I consider as embarked with that of the army at large.

"But the gentlemen," adds he "cannot be in earnest; they cannot seriously intend anything that would be a stain on their former reputation. They have only reasoned wrong about the means of obtaining a good end; and on consideration, I hope and flatter myself they will renounce what must appear to be improper. At the opening of a campaign, when under marching orders for an important service, their own honor, duty to the public and to themselves, and a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. It will even wound their delicacy, coolly to reflect that they have hazarded a step which has an air of dictating to their country, by taking advantage of the necessity of the moment; for the declaration they have made to the State, at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much that aspect."

These and other observations of similar purport, were contained in a letter to General Maxwell, their commander, to be laid before the officers. It produced a respectful reply, but one which intimated no disposition to swerve from their determination. After reiterating their grievances, "we are sorry," added they, "that you should imagine we meant to disobey orders. It was and is still our determination to march with our regiment, and to do the duty of officers until the Legislature shall have a reasonable time to appoint others, but no longer. We beg leave to assure your Excellency, that we have the highest sense of your ability and virtues; that executing your orders has ever given us pleasure; that we love the service, and love our country;—but when that country gets so lost to virtue and justice, as to forget to support its servants, it then becomes their duty to retire from its service."

A commander of less magnanimity than Washington, would have answered this letter by a stern exercise of military rule, and driven the really aggrieved parties to extremity. He nobly contented himself with the following comment on it, forming a paragraph of a letter to General Maxwell. "I am sorry

the gentlemen persist in the principles which dictated the step they have taken ; as, the more the affair unfolds itself, the more reason I see to disapprove it. But in the present view they have of the matter, and with their present feelings, it is not probable any new argument that could be offered would have more influence than the former. While, therefore, the gentlemen continue in the execution of their duty, as they declare themselves heartily disposed to do, I shall only regret that they have taken a step of which they must hereafter see the impropriety."

The Legislature of New Jersey imitated the forbearance of Washington. Compounding with their pride, they let the officers know that on their withdrawing the memorial, the subject-matter of it would be promptly attended to. It was withdrawn. Resolutions were immediately passed, granting pecuniary supplies to both officers and soldiers. The money was forthwith forwarded to camp, and the brigade marched.

Such was the paternal spirit exercised by Washington, in all the difficulties and discontents of the army. How clearly he understood the genius and circumstances of the people he was called upon to manage ; and how truly was he their protector even more than their commander !

We shall briefly dispose of the Indian campaign. The first act was an expedition from Fort Schuyler by Colonel Van Schaick, Lieutenant-colonel Willett, and Major Cochran, with about six hundred men, who, on the 19th of April, surprised the towns of the Onondagas ; destroyed the whole settlement, and returned to the fort without the loss of a single man.

The great expedition of the campaign, however was in revenge of the massacre of Wyoming. Early in the summer, three thousand men assembled in that lately desolated region, and conducted by General Sullivan, moved up the west branch of the Susquehanna into the Seneca country. While on the way, they were joined by a part of the western army, under General James Clinton, who had come from the valley of the Mohawk by Otsego Lake and the east branch of the Susquehanna. The united forces amounted to about five thousand men, of which Sullivan had the general command.

The Indians, and their allies the Tories, had received information of the intended invasion, and appeared in arms to oppose it. They were much inferior in force, however, being about fifteen hundred Indians and two hundred white men, commanded by the two Butlers, Johnson, and Brant. A battle took place at Newton on the 29th of August, in which they were easily defeated, Sullivan then pushed forward into the heart of the In-

dian country, penetrating as far as the Genesee River, laying everything waste, setting fire to deserted dwellings, destroying cornfields, orchards, gardens, everything that could give sustenance to man, the design being to starve the Indians out of the country. The latter retreated before him with their families, and at length took refuge under the protection of the British garrison at Niagara. Having completed his errand, Sullivan returned to Easton in Pennsylvania. The thanks of Congress were voted to him and his army, but he shortly resigned his commission on account of ill health, and retired from the service.

A similar expedition was undertaken by Colonel Brodhead, from Pittsburg up the Alleghany, against the Mingo, Muncey, and Seneca tribes, with similar results. The wisdom of Washington's policy of carrying the war against the Indians into their country, and conducting it in their own way was apparent from the general intimidation produced among the tribes by these expeditions, and the subsequent infrequency of their murderous incursions; the instigation of which by the British, had been the most inhuman feature of this war.

CHAPTER LIV.

PREDATORY WARFARE OF THE ENEMY.—RAVAGES IN THE CHESAPEAKE.—HOSTILITIES ON THE HUDSON.—VERPLANCK'S POINT AND STONY POINT TAKEN.—CAPTURE OF NEW HAVEN.—FAIRFIELD AND NORWALK DESTROYED.—WASHINGTON PLANS A COUNTER-STROKE.—STORMING OF STONY POINT.—GENEROUS LETTER OF LEE.

THE situation of Sir Henry Clinton must have been mortifying in the extreme to an officer of lofty ambition and generous aims. His force, between sixteen and seventeen thousand strong, was superior in number, discipline, and equipment to that of Washington; yet his instructions confined him to a predatory warfare, carried on by attacks and marauds at distant points, harassing, it is true, yet irritating to the country intended to be conciliated, and brutalizing to his own soldiery. Such was the nature of an expedition set on foot against the commerce of the Chesapeake; by which commerce the armies were supplied and the credit of the government sustained. On the 9th of May, a squadron under Sir George Collier, convoying transports and galleys, with twenty-five hundred men, commanded by General Mathews, entered these waters, took pos-

session of Portsmouth without opposition, sent out armed parties against Norfolk, Suffolk, Gosport, Kemp's Landing, and other neighboring places, where were immense quantities of provisions, naval and military stores, and merchandise of all kinds; with numerous vessels, some on the stocks, others richly laden. Wherever they went, a scene of plunder, conflagration, and destruction ensued. A few days sufficed to ravage the whole neighborhood.

While this was going on at the South, Washington received intelligence of movements at New York and in its vicinity, which made him apprehend an expedition against the Highlands of the Hudson.

Since the loss of forts Montgomery and Clinton, the main defenses of the Highlands had been established at the sudden bend of the river where it winds between West Point and Constitution Island. Two opposite forts commanded this bend, and an iron chain which was stretched across it.

Washington had projected two works also just below the Highlands, at Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, to serve as outworks of the mountain passes, and to protect King's Ferry, the most direct and convenient communication between the Northern and Middle States.

A small but strong fort had been erected on Verplanck's Point, and was garrisoned by seventy men under Captain Armstrong. A more important work was in progress at Stony Point. When completed, these two forts, on opposite promontories, would form as it were the lower gates to the Highlands; miniature Pillars of Hercules, of which Stony Point was the Gibraltar.

To be at hand in case of any real attempt upon the Highlands, Washington drew up with his forces in that direction; moving by the way of Morristown.

An expedition up the Hudson was really the object of Sir Henry Clinton's movements, and for this he was strengthened by the return of Sir George Collier with his marauding ships and forces from Virginia. On the 30th of May, Sir Henry set out on his second grand cruise up the Hudson, with an armament of about seventy sail, great and small, and one hundred and fifty flat boats. Admiral Sir George Collier commanded the armament, and there was a land force of about five thousand men under General Vaughan.

The first aim of Sir Henry was to get possession of Stony and Verplanck's Points; his former expedition had acquainted him with the importance of this pass of the river. On the morning of the 31st, the forces were landed in two divisions,

the largest under General Vaughan, on the east side of the river, about seven or eight miles below Verplanck's Point; the other, commanded by Sir Henry in person, landed in Haverstraw Bay, about three miles below Stony Point. There were but about thirty men in the unfinished fort; they abandoned it on the approach of the enemy, and retreated into the Highlands, having first set fire to the blockhouse. The British took quiet possession of the fort in the evening; dragged up cannon and mortars in the night, and at daybreak opened a furious fire upon Fort Lafayette. It was cannonaded at the same time by the armed vessels, and a demonstration was made on it by the division under General Vaughan. Thus surrounded, the little garrison of seventy men was forced to surrender with no other stipulation than safety to their persons and to the property they had in the fort. Major André was aide-de-camp to Sir Henry, and signed the articles of capitulation.

Sir Henry Clinton stationed garrisons in both posts, and set to work with great activity to complete the fortification of Stony Point. His troops remained for several days in two divisions on the opposite sides of the river; the fleet generally fell down a little below King's Ferry; some of the square-rigged vessels, however, with others of a smaller size, and flat-bottomed boats, having troops on board, dropped down Haverstraw Bay, and finally disappeared behind the promontories which advance across the upper part of the Tappan Sea.

Some of the movements of the enemy perplexed Washington exceedingly. He presumed, however, that the main object of Sir Henry was to get possession of West Point, the guardian fortress of the river, and that the capture of Stony and Verplanck's Points were preparatory steps. He would fain have dislodged him from these posts, which cut off all communication by the way of King's Ferry, but they were too strong; he had not the force nor military apparatus necessary. Deferring any attempt on them for the present, he took measures for the protection of West Point. Leaving General Putnam and the main body of the army at Smith's Clove, a mountain pass in the rear of Haverstraw, he removed his head-quarters to New Windsor, to be near West Point in case of need, and to press the completion of its works. General McDougall was transferred to the command of the Point. Three brigades were stationed at different places on the opposite side of the river, under General Heath, from which fatigue parties crossed daily to work on the fortifications.

This strong disposition of the American forces checked Sir Henry's designs against the Highlands. Contenting himself,

therefore, for the present, with the acquisition of Stony and Verplanck's Points, he returned to New York ; where he soon set on foot a desolating expedition along the seaboard of Connecticut. That State, while it furnished the American armies with provisions and recruits, and infested the sea with privateers, had hitherto experienced nothing of the horrors of war within its borders. Sir Henry, in compliance with his instructions from government, was now about to give it a scourging lesson ; and he entertained the hope that, in so doing, he might draw down Washington from his mountain fastnesses, and lay open the Hudson to a successful incursion.

General (late governor) Tryon, was the officer selected by Sir Henry for this inglorious, but apparently congenial service. About the beginning of July he embarked with two thousand six hundred men in a fleet of transports and tenders, and was convoyed up the Sound by Sir George Collier with two ships of war.

On the 5th of July, the troops landed near New Haven, in two divisions, one led by Tryon, the other by Brigadier-general Garth, his lieutenant. They came upon the neighborhood by surprise ; yet the militia assembled in haste, and made a resolute though ineffectual opposition. The British captured the town, dismantled the fort, and took or destroyed all the vessels in the harbor ; with all the artillery, ammunition, and public stores. Several private houses were plundered ; but this, it was said, was done by the soldiery contrary to orders. The enemy, in fact, claimed great credit for lenity in refraining from universal sackage, considering the opposition they had experienced while on the march, and that some of the inhabitants of the town had fired upon them from the windows.

They next proceeded to Fairfield ; where, meeting with greater resistance, they thought the moment arrived for a wholesome example of severity. Accordingly, they not merely ravaged and destroyed the public stores and the vessels in the harbor, but laid the town itself in ashes. The exact return of this salutary lesson gives the destruction of ninety-seven dwelling-houses, sixty-seven barns and stables, forty-eight store-houses, three places of worship, a court-house, a jail, and two school-houses.

The sight of their homes laid desolate, and their dwellings wrapped in flames, only served to exasperate the inhabitants, and produce a more determined opposition to the progress of the destroyers ; whereupon the ruthless ravage of the latter increased as they advanced.

At Norwalk, where they landed on the 11th of July, they

burnt one hundred and thirty dwelling-houses, eighty-seven barns, twenty-two store-houses, seventeen shops, four mills, two places of worship, and five vessels which were in the harbor. All this was private property, and the loss fell on individuals engaged in the ordinary occupations of life. These acts of devastation were accompanied by atrocities, inevitable where the brutal passions of the soldiery are aroused. They were unprovoked, too, by any unusual acts of hostility, the militia having no time to assemble, excepting in small parties for the defense of their homes and firesides. The loss of the British throughout the whole expedition amounted, according to their own accounts, to twenty killed, ninety-six wounded, and thirty-two missing.

It was intended to crown this grand ravage by a descent on New London, a noted rendezvous of privateers; but as greater opposition was expected there than at either of the other places, the squadron returned to Huntington Bay, on Long Island, to await reinforcements; and Commodore Collier proceeded to Throg's Neck, to confer with Sir Henry Clinton about further operations.

In this conference Sir Henry was assured that the recent expedition was producing the most salutary effects; that the principal inhabitants were incensed at the apathy of Washington in remaining encamped near the Hudson, while their country was ravaged, and their homes laid in ashes; that they complained equally of Congress, and talked of withdrawing from it their allegiance, and making terms with the British commanders for themselves; finally, it was urged that the proposed expedition against New London would carry these salutary effects still further, and confirm the inhabitants in the sentiments they were beginning to express.

Such were the delusive representations continually made to the British commanders in the course of this war; or rather, such were the delusions in which they themselves indulged, and which led them to the commission of acts calculated to rend still further asunder the kindred countries.

Washington, however, was not culpable of the apathy ascribed to him. On hearing of the departure of the expedition to the eastward, and before he was acquainted with its definite object, he detached General Heath, with two brigades of Connecticut militia, to counteract the movements of the enemy. This was all that he could spare from the force stationed for the protection of the Highlands. Any weakening of his posts there might bring the enemy suddenly upon him, such was their facility in moving from one place to another by means of their shipping.

Indeed, he had divined that a scheme of the kind was at the bottom of the hostile movement to the eastward.

As a kind of counter-check to Sir Henry, he had for some days been planning the recapture of Stony Point and Fort Lafayette. He had reconnoitered them in person; spies had been thrown into them, and information collected from deserters. Stony Point having been recently strengthened by the British, was now the most important. It was a rocky promontory advancing far into the Hudson, which washed three sides of it. A deep morass, covered at high water, separated it from the mainland, but at low tide might be traversed by a narrow causeway and bridge. The promontory was crowned by strong works, furnished with heavy ordnance, commanding the morass and causeway. Lower down were two rows of abatis, and the shore at the foot of the hill could be swept by vessels of war anchored in the river. The garrison was about six hundred strong, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Johnson.

To attempt the surprisal of this isolated post, thus strongly fortified, was a perilous enterprise. General Wayne, Mad Anthony as he was called from his daring valor, was the officer to whom Washington proposed it, and he engaged in it with avidity.* According to Washington's plan, it was to be attempted by light infantry only, at night, and with the utmost secrecy, securing every person they met to prevent discovery. Between one and two hundred chosen men and officers were to make the surprise; preceded by a vanguard of prudent, determined men, well commanded, to remove obstructions, secure sentries, and drive in the guards. The whole were to advance with fixed bayonets and unloaded muskets; all was to be done with the bayonet. These parties were to be followed by the main body, at a small distance, to support and reinforce them, or to bring them off in case of failure. All were to wear white cockades or feathers, and to have a watchword, so as to be distinguished from the enemy. "The usual time for exploits of this kind," observes Washington, "is a little before day, for which reason a vigilant officer is then more on the watch. I therefore recommend a midnight hour."

On getting possession of Stony Point, Wayne was to turn its guns upon Fort Lafayette and the shipping. A detachment was to march down from West Point by Peekskill, to the vicinity of Fort Lafayette, and hold itself ready to join in the at-

* It is a popular tradition, that when Washington proposed to Wayne the storming of Stony Point, the reply was, "General, I'll storm h—ll, if you will only plan it."

tack upon it, as soon as the cannonade began from Stony Point.

On the 15th of July, about mid-day, Wayne set out with his light infantry from Sandy Beach, fourteen miles distant from Stony Point. The roads were rugged, across mountains, morasses, and narrow defiles, in the skirts of the Dunderberg, where frequently it was necessary to proceed in single file. About eight in the evening, they arrived within a mile and a half of the forts, without being discovered. Not a dog barked to give the alarm—all the dogs in the neighborhood had been privately destroyed beforehand. Bringing the men to a halt, Wayne and his principal officers went nearer, and carefully reconnoitered the works and their environs, so as to proceed understandingly and without confusion. Having made their observations they returned to the troops. Midnight, it will be recollected, was the time recommended by Washington for the attack. About half-past eleven, the whole moved forward, guided by a negro of the neighborhood who had frequently carried in fruit to the garrison, and served the Americans as a spy. He led the way, accompanied by two stout men disguised as farmers. The countersign was given to the first sentinel, posted on high ground west of the morass. While the negro talked with him, the men seized and gagged him. The sentinel posted at the head of the causeway was served in the same manner; so that hitherto no alarm was given. The causeway, however, was overflowed, and it was some time after twelve o'clock before the troops could cross; leaving three hundred men under General Muhlenberg, on the western side of the morass, as a reserve.

At the foot of the promontory, the troops were divided into two columns, for simultaneous attacks on opposite sides of the works. One hundred and fifty volunteers, led by Lieutenant-colonel Fleury, seconded by Major Posey, formed the van-guard of the right column. One hundred volunteers under Major Stewart, the van-guard of the left. In advance of each was a forlorn hope of twenty men, one led by Lieutenant Gibbon, the other by Lieutenant Knox; it was their desperate duty to remove the abatis. So well had the whole affair been conducted that the Americans were close upon the outworks before they were discovered. There was then severe skirmishing at the pickets. The Americans used the bayonet; the others discharged their muskets. The reports roused the garrison. Stony Point was instantly in an uproar. The drums beat to arms; every one hurried to his alarm post; the works were hastily manned, and a tremendous fire of grape-shot and musketry opened upon the assailants.

The two columns forced their way with the bayonet, at opposite points, surmounting every obstacle. Colonel Fleury was the first to enter the fort and strike the British flag. Major Posey sprang to the ramparts and shouted, "The fort is our own." Wayne, who led the right column, received at the inner abatis a contusion on the head from a musket ball, and would have fallen to the ground, but his two aides-de-camp supported him. Thinking it was a death wound, "Carry me into the fort," said he, "and let me die at the head of my column." He was borne in between his aides, and soon recovered his self-possession. The two columns arrived nearly at the same time, and met in the centre of the works. The garrison surrendered at discretion.

At daybreak, as Washington directed, the guns of the fort were turned on Fort Lafayette and the shipping. The latter cut their cables and dropped down the river. Through a series of blunders, the detachment from West Point, which was to have coöperated, did not arrive in time, and came unprovided with suitable ammunition for their battering artillery. This part of the enterprise, therefore, failed; Fort Lafayette held out.

The storming of Stony Point stands out in high relief, as one of the most brilliant achievements of the war. The Americans had effected it without firing a musket. On their part, it was the silent, deadly work of the bayonet; the fierce resistance they met at the outset may be judged by the havoc made in their forlorn hope; out of twenty-two men, seventeen were either killed or wounded. The whole loss of the Americans was fifteen killed and eighty-three wounded. Of the garrison, sixty-three were slain, including two officers; five hundred and fifty-three were taken prisoners, among whom were a lieutenant-colonel, four captains, and twenty-three subaltern officers.

Wayne, in his despatches, writes: "The humanity of our brave soldiery, who scorned to take the lives of a vanquished foe when calling for mercy, reflects the highest honor on them, and accounts for the few of the enemy killed on the occasion." His words reflect honor on himself.

A British historian confirms his eulogy. "The conduct of the Americans upon this occasion was highly meritorious," writes he; "for they would have been fully justified in putting the garrison to the sword; not one man on which was put to death but in fair combat." *

* Steadman, vol. i. p. 145.

We are happy to record an instance of generous feeling on the part of General Charles Lee, in connection with Stony Point. When he heard of Wayne's achievement, he wrote to him as follows: "What I am going to say, you will not, I hope, consider as paying my court in this hour of your glory; for, as it is at least my present intention to leave this continent, I can have no interest in paying my court to any individual. What I shall say, therefore, is dictated by the genuine feelings of my heart. I do most sincerely declare, that your assault of Stony Point is not only the most brilliant, in my opinion, throughout the whole course of the war on either side, but that it is the most brilliant I am acquainted with in history; the assault of Schweidnitz by Marshal Laudon, I think inferior to it. I wish you, therefore, most sincerely, joy of the laurels you have deservedly acquired, and that you may long live to wear them."

This is the more magnanimous on the part of Lee, as Wayne had been the chief witness against him in the court-martial after the affair of Monmouth, greatly to his annoyance. While Stony Point, therefore, stands a lasting monument of the daring courage of "Mad Anthony," let it call up the remembrance of this freak of generosity on the part of the eccentric Lee.

Tidings of the capture of Stony Point, and the imminent danger of Fort Lafayette, reached Sir Henry Clinton just after his conference with Sir George Collier at Throg's Neck. The expedition against New London was instantly given up; the transports and troops were recalled; a forced march was made to Dobb's Ferry on the Hudson; a detachment was sent up the river in transports to relieve Fort Lafayette, and Sir Henry followed with a greater force, hoping Washington might quit his fastnesses, and risk a battle for the possession of Stony Point.

Again the Fabian policy of the American commander-in-chief disappointed the British general. Having well examined the post in company with an engineer and several general officers, he found that at least fifteen hundred men would be required to maintain it, a number not to be spared from the army at present.

The works, too, were only calculated for defense on the land side, and were open towards the river, where the enemy depended upon protection from their ships. It would be necessary to construct them anew, with great labor. The army, also, would have to be in the vicinity, too distant from West Point to aid in completing or defending its fortifications, and exposed to the risk of a general action on unfavorable terms.

For these considerations, in which all his officers concurred, Washington evacuated the post on the 18th, removing the can-

non and stores, and destroying the works ; after which he drew his forces together in the Highlands, and established his quarters at West Point, not knowing but that Sir Henry might attempt a retaliatory stroke on that most important fortress. The latter retook possession of Stony Point, and fortified and garrisoned it more strongly than ever, but was too wary to risk an attempt upon the strongholds of the Highlands. Finding Washington was not to be tempted out of them, he ordered the transports to fall once more down the river, and returned to his former encampment at Philipsburg.

CHAPTER LV.

EXPEDITION AGAINST PENOBSCOT.—NIGHT SURPRISAL OF PAULUS HOOK. — WASHINGTON FORTIFIES WEST POINT. — HIS STYLE OF LIVING THERE.—TABLE AT HEAD-QUARTERS.—SIR HENRY CLINTON REINFORCED.—ARRIVAL OF D'ESTAING ON THE COAST OF GEORGIA.—PLANS IN CONSEQUENCE.—THE FRENCH MINISTER AT WASHINGTON'S HIGHLAND CAMP.—LETTER TO LAFAYETTE.—D'ESTAING COOPERATES WITH LINCOLN.—REPULSED AT SAVANNAH.—WASHINGTON REINFORCES LINCOLN.—GOES INTO WINTER-QUARTERS.—SIR HENRY CLINTON SENDS AN EXPEDITION TO THE SOUTH.

THE brilliant affair of the storming of Stony Point, was somewhat overshadowed by the result of an enterprise at the eastward, undertaken without consulting Washington. A British detachment from Halifax of seven or eight hundred men, had founded in June a military post on the eastern side of the Bay of Penobscot, nine miles below the river of that name, and were erecting a fort there, intended to protect Nova Scotia, control the frontiers of Massachusetts, and command the vast wooded regions of Maine ; whence inexhaustible supplies of timber might be procured for the royal shipyards at Halifax and elsewhere.

The people of Boston, roused by this movement, which invaded their territory, and touched their pride and interests, undertook, on their own responsibility, a naval and military expedition intended to drive off the invaders. All Boston was in a military bustle, enrolling militia and volunteers. An embargo of forty days was laid on the shipping, to facilitate the equipment of the naval armament ; a squadron of armed ships and brigantines under Commodore Saltonstall, at length put to sea,

convoying transports, on board of which were near four thousand land troops under General Lovel.

Arriving in the Penobscot on the 25th of May, they found Colonel Maclean posted on a peninsula, steep and precipitous toward the bay, and deeply trenched on the land side, with three ships of war anchored before it.

Lovel was repulsed, with some little loss, in an attempt to effect a landing on the peninsula; but finally succeeded before daybreak on the 28th. The moment was propitious for a bold and vigorous blow. The fort was but half finished; the guns were not mounted; the three armed vessels could not have offered a formidable resistance; but, unfortunately, the energy of a Wayne was wanting to the enterprise. Lovel proceeded by regular siege. He threw up works at seven hundred and fifty yards distance, and opened a cannonade, which was continued from day to day, for a fortnight. The enemy availed themselves of the delay to strengthen their works, in which they were aided by men from the ships. Distrustful of the efficiency of the militia and of their continuance in camp, Lovel sent to Boston for a reinforcement of continental troops. He only awaited their arrival to carry the place by storm. A golden opportunity was lost by this excess of caution. It gave time for Admiral Collier at New York to hear of this enterprise, and take measures for its defeat.

On the 13th of August, Lovel was astounded by intelligence that the admiral was arrived before the bay with a superior armament. Thus fairly entrapped, he endeavored to extricate his force with as little loss as possible. Before news of Collier's arrival could reach the fort, he reëmbarked his troops in the transports to make their escape up the river. His armed vessels were drawn up in a crescent as if to give battle, but it was merely to hold the enemy in check. They soon gave way; some were captured, others were set on fire or blown up, and abandoned by their crews. The transports being eagerly pursued and in great danger of being taken, disgorged the troops and seamen on the wild shores of the river: whence they had to make the best of their way to Boston, struggling for upwards of a hundred miles through a pathless wilderness, before they reached the settled parts of the country; and several of them perishing through hunger and exhaustion.

If Washington was chagrined by the signal failure of this expedition, undertaken without his advice, he was cheered by the better fortune of one set on foot about the same time, under his own eye, by his young friend, Major Henry Lee of the Virginia dragoons. This active and daring

officer had frequently been employed by him in scouring the country on the west side of the Hudson to collect information, keep an eye upon the enemy's posts, cut off their supplies, and check their foraging parties. The *coup de main* at Stony Point had piqued his emulation. In his communications to head-quarters he intimated that an opportunity presented for an exploit of almost equal daring. In the course of his reconnoitering, and by means of spies, he had discovered that the British post at Paulus Hook, immediately opposite to New York, was very negligently guarded. Paulus Hook is a long, low point of the Jersey shore, stretching into the Hudson, and connected to the main land by a sandy isthmus. A fort had been erected on it, and garrisoned with four or five hundred men, under the command of Major Sutherland. It was a strong position. A creek fordable only in two places rendered the Hook difficult of access. Within this, a deep trench had been cut across the isthmus, traversed by a drawbridge with a barred gate; and still within this was a double row of abatis, extending into the water. The whole position, with the country immediately adjacent, was separated from the rest of Jersey by the Hackensack River, running parallel to the Hudson, at the distance of a very few miles, and only traversable in boats, excepting at the New Bridge, about fourteen miles from Paulus Hook.

Confident in the strength of his position, and its distance from any American force, Major Sutherland had become remiss in his military precautions; the want of vigilance in a commander soon produces carelessness in subalterns, and a general negligence prevailed in the garrison.

All this had been ascertained by Major Lee; and he now proposed the daring project of surprising the fort at night, and thus striking an insulting blow "within cannon-shot of New York." Washington was pleased with the project; he had a relish for signal enterprises of the kind; he was aware of their striking and salutary effect upon both friend and foe; and he was disposed to favor the adventurous schemes of this young officer. The chief danger in the present one, would be in the evacuation and retreat after the blow had been effected, owing to the proximity of the enemy's force at New York. In consenting to the enterprise, therefore, he stipulated that Lee should not undertake it unless sure, from previous observation, that the post could be carried, by instant surprise; when carried no time was to be lost in attempting to bring off cannon or any other articles; or in collecting stragglers of the garrison who might skulk and hide themselves. He was "to surprise

the post, bring off the garrison immediately, and effect a retreat."

On the 18th of August, Lee set out on the expedition, at the head of three hundred men of Lord Stirling's division, and a troop of dismounted dragoons under Captain McLane. The attack was to be made that night. Lest the enemy should hear of their movement, it was given out that they were on a mere foraging excursion. The road they took lay along that belt of rocky and wooded heights which borders the Hudson, and forms a rugged neck between it and the Hackensack. Lord Stirling followed with five hundred men, and encamped at the New Bridge on that river, to be at hand to render aid if required. As it would be perilous to return along the rugged neck just mentioned, from the number of the enemy encamped along the Hudson, Lee, after striking the blow, was to push for Dow's Ferry on the Hackensack, not far from Paulus Hook, where boats would be waiting to receive him.

It was between two and three in the morning when Lee arrived at the creek which rendered Paulus Hook difficult of access. It happened, fortunately, that Major Sutherland, the British commander, had the day before detached a foraging party under a Major Buskirk, to a part of the country called the English Neighborhood. As Lee and his men approached, they were mistaken by the sentinel for this party on its return. The darkness of the night favored the mistake. They passed the creek and ditch, entered the works unmolested, and had made themselves masters of the post before the negligent garrison were well roused from sleep. Major Sutherland and about sixty Hessians threw themselves into a small block-house on the left of the fort, and opened an irregular fire. To attempt to dislodge them would have cost too much time. Alarm guns from the ships in the river and the forts at New York threatened speedy reinforcements to the enemy. Having made one hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, among whom were three officers, Lee commenced his retreat without tarrying to destroy either barracks or artillery. He had achieved his object—a *coup de main* of signal audacity. Few of the enemy were slain, for there was but little fighting, and no massacre. His own loss was two men killed and three wounded.

His retreat was attended by perils and perplexities. Through blunder or misapprehension, the boats which he was to have found at Dow's Ferry on the Hackensack, disappointed him; and he had to make his way with his weary troops up the neck of land between that river and the Hudson, in imminent danger of being cut up by Buskirk and his scouting detachment. Fortunately Lord Stirling heard of his peril, and sent out a force to

cover his retreat, which was effected in safety. Washington felt the value of this hardy and brilliant exploit. "The increase of confidence," said he, "which the army will derive from this affair and that of Stony Point, though great, will be among the least of the advantages resulting from these events." In a letter to the President of Congress, he extolled the prudence, address, enterprise, and bravery displayed on the occasion by Major Lee; in consequence of which the latter received the signal reward of a gold medal.

Washington was now at West Point, diligently providing for the defense of the Highlands against any further attempts of the enemy. During the time that he made this his head-quarters, the most important works, we are told were completed, especially the fort at West Point, which formed the citadel of those mountains.

Of his singularly isolated situation with respect to public affairs, we have evidence in the following passage of a letter to Edmund Randolph, who had recently taken his seat in Congress: "I shall be happy in such communications as your leisure and other considerations will permit you to transmit to me, for I am as totally unacquainted with the political state of things, and what is going forward in the great national council, as if I was an alien; when a competent knowledge of the temper and designs of our allies, from time to time, and the frequent changes and complexion of affairs in Europe might, as they ought to do, have a considerable influence on the operations of our army, and would in many cases determine the propriety of measures, which under a cloud of darkness can only be groped at. I say this upon a presumption that Congress, either through their own ministers or that of France, must be acquainted in some degree with the plans of Great Britain, and the designs of France and Spain. If I mistake in this conjecture, it is to be lamented that they have not better information: or, if political motives render disclosures of this kind improper, I am content to remain in ignorance."

Of the style of living at head-quarters, we have a picture in the following letter to Doctor John Cochran, the surgeon-general and physician of the army. It is almost the only instance of sportive writing in all Washington's correspondence.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I have asked Mrs. Cochran and Mrs. Livingston to dine with me to-morrow; but am I not in honor bound to apprise them of their fare? As I hate deception, even where the imagination only is concerned, I will. It is needless to premise that my table is large enough to hold the

ladies. Of this they had ocular proof yesterday. To say how it is usually covered is more essential; and this shall be the purport of my letter.

"Since our arrival at this happy spot, we have had a ham, sometimes a shoulder of bacon, to grace the head of the table: a piece of roast beef adorns the foot; and a dish of beans or greens, almost imperceptible, decorates the centre. When the cook has a mind to cut a figure, which I presume will be the case to-morrow, we have two beefsteak pies, or dishes of crabs, in addition, one on each side of the centre dish, dividing the space and reducing the distance between dish and dish to about six feet, which, without them, would be about twelve feet apart. Of late he has had the surprising sagacity to discover that apples will make pies, and it is a question, if, in the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples instead of having both of beefsteaks. If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and will submit to partake of it on plates once tin but now iron (not become so by the labor of scouring), I shall be happy to see them."

We may add, that, however poor the fare and poor the table equipage at head-quarters, everything was conducted with strict etiquette and decorum, and we make no doubt the ladies in question were handed in with as much courtesy to the bacon and greens and tin dishes, as though they were to be regaled with the daintiest viands, served up on enameled plate and porcelain.

The arrival of Admiral Arbuthnot, with a fleet, bringing three thousand troops and a supply of provisions and stores, strengthened the hands of Sir Henry Clinton. Still he had not sufficient force to warrant any further attempt up the Hudson; Washington, by his diligence in fortifying West Point, having rendered that fastness of the Highlands apparently impregnable. Sir Henry turned his thoughts, therefore, towards the South, hoping, by a successful expedition in that direction, to counterbalance ill success in other quarters. As this would require large detachments, he threw up additional works on New York Island and at Brooklyn, to render his position secure with the diminished force that would remain with him.

At this juncture news was received of the arrival of the Count D'Estaing, with a formidable fleet on the coast of Georgia, having made a successful cruise in the West Indies, in the course of which he had taken St. Vincent's and Grenada. A combined attack upon New York was again talked of. In anticipation of it, Washington called upon several of the Middle

States for supplies of all kinds, and reinforcements of militia. Sir Henry Clinton, also, changed his plans; caused Rhode Island to be evacuated; the troops and stores to be brought away; the garrisons brought off from Stony and Verplanck's Points, and all his forces to be concentrated at New York, which he endeavored to put in the strongest posture of defense.

Intelligence recently received, too, that Spain had joined France in hostilities against England, contributed to increase the solicitude and perplexities of the enemy, while it gave fresh confidence to the Americans.

The Chevalier de la Luzerne, minister from France, with Mons. Barbe Marbois, his secretary of legation, having recently landed at Boston, paid Washington a visit at his mountain fortress, bringing letters of introduction from Lafayette. The chevalier not having yet announced himself to Congress, did not choose to be received in his public character. "If he had," writes Washington, "except paying him military honors, it was not my intention to depart from that plain and simple manner of living, which accords with the real interest and policy of men struggling under every difficulty for the attainment of the most inestimable blessing of life, *liberty*."

In conformity with his intention, he welcomed the chevalier to the mountains with the thunder of artillery, and received him at his fortress with military ceremonial; but very probably surprised him with the stern simplicity of his table, while he charmed him with the dignity and grace with which he presided at it. The ambassador evidently acquitted himself with true French suavity and diplomatic tact. "He was polite enough," writes Washington, "to approve my principle, and condescended to appear pleased with our Spartan living. In a word, he made us all exceedingly happy by his affability and good humor while he remained in camp."

The letters from Lafayette spoke of his favorable reception at court, and his appointment to an honorable situation in the French army. "I had no doubt," writes Washington, "That this would be the case. To hear it from yourself adds pleasure to the account. And here, my dear friend, let me congratulate you. None can do it with more warmth of affection, or sincere joy than myself. Your forward zeal in the cause of liberty; your singular attachment to this infant world; your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America, but since your return to France, to serve the United States; your polite attention to Americans, and your strict and uniform friendship for *me*, have ripened the first impressions of esteem and attachment which I imbibed for you, into such perfect love and gratitude,

as neither time nor absence can impair. This will warrant my assuring you that, whether in the character of an officer at the head of a corps of gallant Frenchmen, if circumstances should require this, whether as a major-general commanding a division of the American army, or whether, after our swords and spears have given place to the ploughshare and the pruning-hook, I see you as a private gentleman, a friend and companion, I shall welcome you with all the warmth of friendship to Columbia's shores; and, in the latter case, to my rural cottage, where homely fare and a cordial reception, shall be substituted for delicacies and costly living. This, from past experience, I know you can submit to; and if the lovely partner of your happiness will consent to participate with *us* in such rural entertainment and amusements, I can undertake, on behalf of Mrs. Washington, that she will do everything in her power to make Virginia agreeable to the marchioness. My inclination and endeavors to do this cannot be doubted, when I assure you, that I love everybody that is dear to you, and consequently participate in the pleasure you feel in the prospect of again becoming a parent, and do most sincerely congratulate you and your lady on this fresh pledge she is about to give you of her love."

Washington's anticipations of a combined operation with D'Estaing against New York were again disappointed. The French admiral, on arriving on the coast of Georgia, had been persuaded to coöperate with the Southern army, under General Lincoln, in an attempt to recover Savannah, which had fallen into the hands of the British during the preceding year. For three weeks a seige was carried on with great vigor, by regular approaches on land, and cannonade and bombardment from the shipping. On the 9th of October, although the approaches were not complete, and no sufficient breach had been effected, Lincoln and D'Estaing, at the head of their choicest troops, advanced before daybreak to storm the works. The assault was gallant but unsuccessful; both Americans and French had planted their standards on the redoubts, but were finally repulsed. After the repulse, both armies retired from before the place, the French having lost in killed and wounded upwards of six hundred men, the Americans about four hundred. D'Estaing himself was among the wounded, and the gallant Count Pulaski among the slain. The loss of the enemy was trifling, being protected by their works.

The Americans recrossed the Savannah River into South Carolina; the militia returned to their homes, and the French reëmbarked.

The tidings of this reverse, which reached Washington late in November, put an end to all prospect of coöperation from the French fleet; a consequent change took place in all his plans. The militia of New York and Massachusetts, recently assembled, were disbanded, and arrangements were made for the winter. The army was thrown into two divisions; one was to be stationed under General Heath in the Highlands, for the protection of West Point and the neighboring posts; the other and principal division was to be huddled near Morristown, where Washington was to have his head-quarters. The cavalry were to be sent to Connecticut.

Understanding that Sir Henry Clinton was making preparations at New York for a large embarkation of troops, and fearing they might be destined against Georgia and Carolina, he resolved to detach the greater part of his Southern troops for the protection of those States; a provident resolution, in which he was confirmed by subsequent instructions from Congress. Accordingly, the North Carolina brigade took up its march for Charlestown in November, and the whole of the Virginia line in December.

Notwithstanding the recent preparations at New York, the ships remained in port, and the enemy held themselves in collected force there. Doubts began to be entertained of some furtive design nearer at hand, and measures were taken to protect the army against an attack when in winter-quarters. Sir Henry, however, was regulating his movements by those the French fleet might make after the repulse at Savannah. Intelligence at length arrived that it had been dispersed by a violent storm. Count D'Estaing, with a part, had shaped his course for France; the rest had proceeded to the West Indies.

Sir Henry now lost no time in carrying his plans into operation. Leaving the garrison of New York under the command of Lieutenant-general Knyphausen, he embarked several thousand men, on board of transports, to be convoyed by five ships of the line and several frigates under Admiral Arbuthnot, and set sail on the 26th of December, accompanied by Lord Cornwallis, on an expedition intended for the capture of Charlestown and the reduction of South Carolina.

CHAPTER LVI.

SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMY AT MORRISTOWN.—RIGOROUS WINTER.—DERANGEMENT OF THE CURRENCY.—CONFUSION IN THE COMMISSARIAT.—IMPRESSMENT OF SUPPLIES.—PATRIOTIC CONDUCT OF THE PEOPLE OF NEW JERSEY.—THE BAY OF NEW YORK FROZEN OVER.—LORD STIRLING'S EXPEDITION AGAINST STATEN ISLAND.—KNYPHAUSEN'S INCURSION INTO THE JERSEYS.—CALDWELL'S CHURCH AT ELIZABETHTOWN BURNT.—CHARACTER OF ITS PASTOR.—FORAY INTO WEST-CHESTER COUNTY.—BURNING OF YOUNG'S HOUSE IN THE VALLEY OF THE NEPERAN.

THE dreary encampment at Valley Forge has become proverbial for its hardships; yet they were scarcely more severe than those suffered by Washington's army during the present winter, while huddled among the heights of Morristown. The winter set in early, and was uncommonly rigorous. The transportation of supplies was obstructed; the magazines were exhausted, and the commissaries had neither money nor credit to enable them to replenish them. For weeks at a time the army was on half allowance; sometimes without meat, sometimes without bread, sometimes without both. There was a scarcity, too, of clothing and blankets, so that the poor soldiers were starving with cold as well as hunger.

Washington wrote to President Reed of Pennsylvania, entreating aid and supplies from that State to keep his army from disbanding. "We have never," said he, "experienced a like extremity at any period of the war."*

The year 1780 opened upon a famishing camp. "For a fortnight past," writes Washington, on the 8th of January, "the troops, both officers and men, have been almost perishing with want. Yet," adds he, feelingly, "they have borne their sufferings with a patience that merits the approbation, and ought to excite the sympathies of their countrymen."

The severest trials of the Revolution, in fact, were not in the field, where there were shouts to excite and laurels to be won; but in the squalid wretchedness of ill-provided camps, where there was nothing to cheer and everything to be endured. To suffer was the lot of the revolutionary soldier.

* *Life of Reed*, ii. 189.

A rigorous winter had much to do with the actual distresses of the army, but the root of the evil lay in the derangement of the currency. Congress had commenced the war without adequate funds, and without the power of imposing direct taxes. To meet pressing emergencies, it had emitted paper money, which, for a time, passed currently at par; but sank in value as further emissions succeeded, and that already in circulation remained unredeemed. The several States added to the evil by emitting paper in their separate capacities: thus the country gradually became flooded with a "Continental currency," as it was called; irredeemable, and of no intrinsic value. The consequence was a general derangement of trade and finance. The Continental currency declined to such a degree, that forty dollars in paper were equivalent to only one in specie.

Congress attempted to put a stop to this depreciation, by making paper money a legal tender, at its nominal value, in the discharge of debts, however contracted. This opened the door to knavery, and added a new feature to the evil.

The commissaries now found it difficult to purchase supplies for the immediate wants of the army, and impossible to provide any stores in advance. They were left destitute of funds, and the public credit was prostrated by the accumulating debts suffered to remain uncanceled. The changes which had taken place in the commissary department added to this confusion. The commissary-general, instead of receiving, as heretofore, a commission on expenditures, was to have a fixed salary in paper currency; and his deputies were to be compensated in like manner, without the usual allowance of rations and forage. No competent agents could be procured on such terms; and the derangement produced throughout the department compelled Colonel Wadsworth, the able and upright commissary-general, to resign.

In the present emergency Washington was reluctantly compelled, by the distresses of the army, to call upon the counties of the State for supplies of grain and cattle, proportioned to their respective abilities. These supplies were to be brought into the camp within a certain time; the grain to be measured and the cattle estimated by any two of the magistrates of the country in conjunction with the commissary, and certificates to be given by the latter, specifying the quantity of each and the terms of payment.

Wherever a compliance with this call was refused, the articles required were to be impressed: it was a painful alternative, yet nothing else could save the army from dissolution or starving. Washington charged his officers to act with as much tenderness

as possible, graduating the exaction according to the stock of each individual, so that no family should be deprived of what was necessary to its subsistence. "While your measures are adapted to the emergency," writes he to Colonel Matthias Ogden, "and you consult what you owe to the service, I am persuaded you will not forget that, as we are compelled by necessity to take the property of citizens for the support of an army on which their safety depends, we should be careful to manifest that we have a reverence for their rights, and wish not to do anything which that necessity, and even their own good, do not absolutely require."

To the honor of the magistrates and the people of Jersey, Washington testifies that his requisitions were punctually complied with, and in many counties exceeded. Too much praise, indeed, cannot be given to the people of this State for the patience with which most of them bore these exactions, and the patriotism with which many of them administered to the wants of their countrymen in arms. Exhausted as the State was by repeated drainings, yet, at one time, when deep snows cut off all distant supplies, Washington's army was wholly subsisted by it. "Provisions came in with hearty good-will from the farmers in Medham, Chatham, Hanover, and other rural places, together with stockings, shoes, coats, and blankets; while the women met together to knit and sew for the soldiery." *

As the winter advanced, the cold increased in severity. It was the most intense ever remembered in the country. The great bay of New York was frozen over. No supplies could come to the city by water. Provisions grew scanty, and there was such lack of fire-wood, that old transports were broken up, and uninhabited wooden houses pulled down for fuel. The safety of the city was endangered. The ships of war, immovably ice-bound in its harbor, no longer gave it protection. The insular security of the place was at an end. An army with its heaviest artillery and baggage might cross the Hudson on the ice. The veteran Knyphausen began to apprehend an invasion, and took measures accordingly; the seamen of the ships and transports were landed and formed into companies, and the

* From manuscript notes by the Rev. Joseph Tuttle. This worthy clergyman gives many anecdotes illustrative of the active patriotism of the Jersey women. Anna Kitchel, wife of a farmer of Whippany, is repeatedly his theme of well-merited eulogium. Her potato bin, meal bag, and granary, writes he, had always some comfort for the patriot soldiers. When unable to billet them in her house, a huge kettle filled with meat and vegetables was hung over the fire, that they might not go away hungry.

inhabitants of the city were embodied, officered, and subjected to garrison duty.

Washington was aware of the opportunity which offered itself for a signal *coup de main*, but was not in a condition to profit by it. His troops, huddled among the heights of Morristown, were half fed, half clothed, and inferior in number to the garrison of New York. He was destitute of funds necessary to fit them for the enterprise, and the quartermaster could not furnish means of transportation.

Still, in the frozen condition of the bay and rivers, some minor blow might be attempted, sufficient to rouse and cheer the spirits of the people. With this view, having ascertained that the ice formed a bridge across the strait between the Jersey shore and Staten Island, he projected a descent upon the latter by Lord Stirling with twenty-five hundred men, to surprise and capture a British force of ten or twelve hundred.

His lordship crossed on the night of the 14th of January, from De Hart's Point to the island. His approach was discovered; the troops took refuge in the works, which were too strongly situated to be attacked; a channel remaining open through the ice across the bay, a boat was despatched to New York for reinforcements.

The projected surprise having thus proved a complete failure, and his own situation becoming hazardous, Lord Stirling recrossed to the Jersey shore with a number of prisoners whom he had captured. He was pursued by a party of cavalry, which he repulsed, and effected a retreat to Elizabethtown. Some few stragglers fell into the hands of the enemy, and many of his men were severely frostbitten.

By way of retort, Knyphausen, on the 25th of January, sent out two detachments to harass the American outposts. One crossed to Paulus Hook, and being joined by part of the garrison of that post, pushed on to Newark, surprised and captured a company stationed there, set fire to the academy, and returned without loss.

The other detachment, consisting of one hundred dragoons and between three and four hundred infantry, under Lieutenant-colonel Boskirk, crossed from Staten Island to Trembly's Point, surprised the picket-guard at Elizabethtown, and captured two majors, two captains, and forty-two privates. This, likewise, was effected without loss. The disgraceful part of the expedition was the burning of the town-house, a church, and a private residence, and the plundering of the inhabitants.

The church destroyed was a Presbyterian place of worship, and its pastor, the Rev. James Caldwell, had rendered himself

an especial object of hostility to both Briton and tory. He was a zealous patriot; had served as chaplain to those portions of the American army that successively occupied the Jerseys; and now officiated in that capacity in Colonel Elias Dayton's regiment, beside occasionally acting as commissary. His church had at times served as hospital to the American soldiers; or shelter to the hastily assembled militia. Its bell was the tocsin of alarm; from its pulpit he had many a time stirred up the patriotism of his countrymen by his ardent, eloquent, and pathetic appeals, laying beside him his pistols before he commenced. His popularity in the army, and among the Jersey people, was unbounded. He was termed by his friends a "rousing gospel preacher," and by the enemy a "frantic priest" and a "rebel firebrand." On the present occasion, his church was set on fire by a virulent tory of the neighborhood, who, as he saw it wrapped in flames, "regetted that the black-coated rebel, Caldwell, was not in his pulpit." We shall have occasion to speak of the fortunes of this pastor and his family hereafter.

Another noted maraud during Knyphausen's military sway, was in the lower part of Westchester County, in a hilly region lying between the British and American lines, which had been the scene of part of the past year's campaign. Being often foraged, its inhabitants had become belligerent in their habits, and quick to retaliate on all marauders.

In this region, about twenty miles from the British outposts, and not far from White Plains, the Americans had established a post of three hundred men at a stone building commonly known as Young's house, from the name of its owner. It commanded a road which passed from north to south down along the narrow but fertile valley of the Sawmill River, now known by its original Indian name of the Neperan. On this road the garrison of Young's house kept a vigilant eye, to intercept the convoys of cattle and provisions which had been collected or plundered by the enemy, and which passed down this valley toward New York. This post had long been an annoyance to the enemy, but its distance from the British lines had hitherto saved it from attack. The country now was covered with snow; troops could be rapidly transported on sleighs; and it was determined that Young's house should be surprised, and this rebel nest broken up.

On the evening of the 2d of February, an expedition set out for the purpose from King's Bridge, led by Lieutenant-colonel Norton, and consisting of four flank companies of guards, two companies of Hessians, and a party of Yagers, all in sleighs; besides a body of Yager cavalry, and a number of mounted Westchester refugees, with two three-pounders,

The snow, being newly fallen, was deep; the sleighs broke their way through it with difficulty. The troops at length abandoned them and pushed forward on foot. The cannon were left behind for the same reason. It was a weary tramp; the snow in many places was more than two feet deep, and they had to take by-ways and cross-roads to avoid the American patrols.

The sun rose while they were yet seven miles from Young's house. To surprise the post was out of the question; still they kept on. Before they could reach the house the country had taken the alarm, and the Westchester yeomanry had armed themselves, and were hastening to aid the garrison.

The British light infantry and grenadiers invested the mansion; the cavalry posted themselves on a neighboring eminence, to prevent retreat or reinforcement, and the house was assailed. It made a brave resistance, and was aided by some of the yeomanry stationed in an adjacent orchard. The garrison, however, was overpowered; numbers were killed, and ninety taken prisoners. The house was sacked and set in flames; and thus having broken up this stronghold of the country, the party hastened to effect a safe return to the lines with their prisoners, some of whom were so badly wounded that they had to be left at different farm-houses on the road. The detachment reached King's Bridge by nine o'clock the same evening, and boasted that, in this enterprise, they had sustained no other loss than two killed and twenty-three wounded.

Of the prisoners many were doubtless farmers and farmers' sons, who had turned out in defense of their homes, and were now to be transferred to the horrors of the jail and sugar-house in New York. We give this affair as a specimen of the *petite guerre* carried on in the southern part of Westchester County: the NEUTRAL GROUND, as it was called, but subjected, from its vicinity to the city, to be foraged by the royal forces, and plundered and insulted by refugees and tories. No part of the Union was more harried and trampled down by friend and foe, during the Revolution, than this debatable region and the Jerseys.

CHAPTER LVII.

ARNOLD IN COMMAND OF PHILADELPHIA.—UNPOPULAR MEASURES.—ARNOLD'S STYLE OF LIVING.—HIS SCHEMES AND SPECULATIONS.—HIS COLLISIONS WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.—HIS LAND PROJECT.—CHARGES SENT AGAINST HIM TO CONGRESS.—HIS ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.—CHARGES REFERRED TO A COURT-MARTIAL.—HIS MARRIAGE.—VERDICT OF THE COURT-MARTIAL.—ARNOLD REPRIMANDED.—OBTAINS LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE ARMY.

THE most irksome duty that Washington had to perform during this winter's encampment at Morristown, regarded General Arnold and his military government of Philadelphia in 1778. To explain it requires a glance back to that period.

At the time of entering upon this command, Arnold's accounts with government were yet unsettled, the committee appointed by Congress, at his own request, to examine them, having considered some of his charges dubious, and others exorbitant. Washington, however, still looked upon him with favor, and, but a month previously, had presented him with a pair of epaulettes and a sword-knot, "as a testimony of his sincere regard and approbation."

The command of Philadelphia, at this time, was a delicate and difficult one, and required to be exercised with extreme circumspection. The boundaries between the powers vested in the military commander, and those inherent in the State government, were ill defined. Disaffection to the American cause prevailed both among the permanent and casual residents, and required to be held in check with firmness but toleration. By a resolve of Congress, no goods, wares, or merchandise were to be removed, transferred, or sold, until the ownership of them could be ascertained by a joint committee of Congress and of the Council of Pennsylvania; any public stores belonging to the enemy were to be seized and converted to the use of the army.

Washington, in his letter of instructions, left it to Arnold's discretion to adopt such measures as should appear to him most effectual and least offensive in executing this resolve of Congress; in which he was to be aided by an assistant quartermaster-general, subject to his directions. "You will take every prudent step in your power," writes Washington, "to preserve

tranquillity and order in the city, and give security to individuals of every class and description, restraining, as far as possible, till the restoration of civil government, every species of persecution, insult, or abuse, either from the soldiery to the inhabitants, or among each other."

One of Arnold's first measures was to issue a proclamation enforcing the resolve of Congress. In so doing he was countenanced by leading personages of Philadelphia, and the proclamation was drafted by General Joseph Reed. The measure excited great dissatisfaction, and circumstances attending the enforcement of it gave rise to scandal. Former instances of a mercenary spirit made Arnold liable to suspicions, and it was alleged that, while by the proclamation he shut up the stores and shops so that even officers of the army could not procure necessary articles of merchandise, he was privately making large purchases for his own enrichment.

His style of living gave point to this scandal. He occupied one of the finest houses in the city; set up a splendid establishment; had his carriage and four horses and a train of domestics; gave expensive entertainments and indulged in a luxury and parade which were condemned as little befitting a republican general; especially one whose accounts with the government were yet unsettled, and who had imputations of mercenary rapacity still hanging over him.

Ostentatious prodigality, in fact, was Arnold's besetting sin. To cope with his overwhelming expenses he engaged in various speculations, more befitting the trafficking habits of his early life than his present elevated position. Nay, he availed himself of that position to aid his speculations, and sometimes made temporary use of the public moneys passing through his hands. In his impatience to be rich, he at one time thought of taking command of a privateer, and making lucrative captures at sea.

In the exercise of his military functions, he had become involved in disputes with the president (Wharton) and executive council of Pennsylvania, and by his conduct which was deemed arbitrary and arrogant, had drawn upon himself the hostility of that body, which became stern and unsparing censors of his conduct.

He had not been many weeks in Philadelphia before he became attached to one of its reigning belles, Miss Margaret Shippen, daughter of Mr. Edward Shippen, in after years chief justice of Pennsylvania. Her family were not considered well affected to the American cause; the young lady herself, during the occupation of the city by the enemy, had been a

"toast" among the British officers, and selected as one of the beauties of the *Mischianza*.

Arnold paid her addresses in an open and honorable style, first obtaining by letter the sanction of the father. Party feeling at that time ran high in Philadelphia on local subjects connected with the change of the State government. Arnold's connection with the Shippen family increased his disfavor with the president and executive council, who were whigs to a man; and it was sneeringly observed, "that he had courted the loyalists from the start."

General Joseph Reed, at that time one of the executive committee, observes in a letter to General Greene, "Will you not think it extraordinary that General Arnold made a public entertainment the night before last, of which, not only common tory ladies, but the wives and daughters of persons proscribed by the State, and now with the enemy at New York, formed a very considerable number? The fact is literally true."

Regarded from a different point of view, this conduct might have been attributed to the courtesy of a gallant soldier; who scorned to carry the animosity of the field into the drawing-room, or to proscribe and persecute the wives and daughters of political exiles.

In the beginning of December, General Reed became president of the executive council of Pennsylvania, and under his administration the ripening hostility to Arnold was brought to a crisis. Among the various schemes of the latter for bettering his fortunes, and securing the means of living when the war should come to an end, was one for forming a settlement in the western part of the State of New York, to be composed, principally, of the officers and soldiers who had served under him. His scheme was approved by Mr. John Jay, the pure-minded patriot of New York, at that time President of Congress, and was sanctioned by the New York delegation. Provided with letters from them, Arnold left Philadelphia about the 1st of January (1779), and set out for Albany to obtain a grant of land for the purpose, from the New York legislature.

Within a day or two after his departure, his public conduct was discussed in the executive council of Pennsylvania, and it was resolved unanimously, that the course of his military command in the city had been in many respects oppressive, unworthy of his rank and station, and highly discouraging to the liberties and interests of America, and disrespectful to the supreme executive authority of the State.

As he was an officer of the United States, the complaints and grievances of Pennsylvania were set forth by the executive

council in eight charges, and forwarded to Congress, accompanied by documents, and a letter from President Reed.

Information of these facts, with a printed copy of the charges, reached Arnold at Washington's camp on the Raritan, which he had visited while on the way to Albany. His first solicitude was about the effect they might have upon Miss Shippen, to whom he was now engaged. In a letter dated February 8th, he entreated her not to suffer these rude attacks on him to give her a moment's uneasiness—they could do him no injury.

On the following day he issued an address to the public, recalling his faithful services of nearly four years, and inveighing against the proceedings of the president and council; who, not content with injuring him in a cruel and unprecedented manner with Congress, had ordered copies of their charges to be printed and dispersed throughout the several States, for the purpose of prejudicing the public mind against him, while the matter was yet in suspense. "Their conduct," writes he, "appears the more cruel and malicious, in making the charges after I had left the city; as my intention of leaving the city was known for five weeks before." This complaint, we must observe, was rebutted on their part, by the assertion that, at the time of his departure, he knew of the accusation that was impending.

In conclusion, Arnold informed the public that he had requested Congress to direct a court-martial to inquire into his conduct, and trusted his countrymen would suspend their judgment in the matter, until he should have an opportunity of being heard.

Public opinion was divided. His brilliant services spoke eloquently in his favor. His admirers repined that a fame won by such daring exploits on the field should be stifled down by cold calumnies in Philadelphia; and many thought, dispassionately, that the State authorities had acted with excessive harshness towards a meritorious officer, in widely spreading their charges against him, and thus, in an unprecedented way, putting a public brand upon him.

On the 16th of February, Arnold's appeal to Congress was referred to the committee which had under consideration the letter of President Reed and its accompanying documents, and it was charged to make a report with all convenient dispatch. A motion was made to suspend Arnold from all command during the inquiry. To the credit of Congress it was negatived.

Much contrariety of feeling prevailed on the subject in the

committee of Congress and the executive council of Pennsylvania, and the correspondence between those legislative bodies was occasionally tinged with needless acrimony.

Arnold, in the course of January, had obtained permission from Washington to resign the command of Philadelphia, but deferred to act upon it, until the charges against him should be examined, lest, as he said, his enemies should misinterpret his motives, and ascribe his resignation to fear of a disgraceful suspension in consequence of those charges.

About the middle of March, the committee brought in a report exculpating him from all criminality in the matters charged against him. As soon as the report was brought in, he considered his name vindicated, and resigned.

Whatever exultation he may have felt was short-lived. Congress did not call up and act upon the report, as, in justice to him, they should have done, whether to sanction it or not; but referred the subject anew to a joint committee of their body and the assembly and council of Pennsylvania. Arnold was at this time on the eve of marriage with Miss Shippen, and, thus circumstanced, it must have been peculiarly galling to his pride to be kept under the odium of imputed delinquencies.

The report of the joint committee brought up animated discussions in Congress. Several resolutions recommended by the committee were merely of a formal nature, and intended to soothe the wounded sensibilities of Pennsylvania; these were passed without dissent; but it was contended that certain charges advanced by the executive council of that State were only cognizable by a court-martial, and, after a warm debate, it was resolved (April 3d), by a large majority, that the commander-in-chief should appoint such a court for the consideration of them.

Arnold inveighed bitterly against the injustice of subjecting him to a trial before a military tribunal for alleged offenses of which he had been acquitted by the committee of Congress. He was sacrificed, he said, to avoid a breach with Pennsylvania. In a letter to Washington, he charged it all to the hostility of President Reed, who, he affirmed, had by his address kept the affair in suspense for two months, and at last obtained the resolution of Congress directing the court-martial. He urged Washington to appoint a speedy day for the trial, that he might not linger under the odium of an unjust public accusation. "I have no doubt of obtaining justice from a court-martial," writes he, "as every officer in the army must feel himself injured by the cruel and unprecedented treatment I have met with. . . .

When your excellency considers my sufferings, and the

cruel situation I am in, your own humanity and feeling as a soldier will render everything I can say further on the subject unnecessary."

It was doubtless soothing to his irritated pride, that the woman on whom he had placed his affections remained true to him; for his marriage with Miss Shippen took place just five days after the mortifying vote of Congress.

Washington sympathized with Arnold's impatience, and appointed the 1st of May for the trial, but it was repeatedly postponed; first, at the request of the Pennsylvania council, to allow time for the arrival of witnesses from the South; afterwards, in consequence of threatening movements of the enemy, which obliged every officer to be at his post. Arnold, in the meantime, continued to reside at Philadelphia, holding his commission in the army, but filling no public office; getting deeper and deeper in debt, and becoming more and more unpopular.

Having once been attacked in the street in the course of some popular tumult, he affected to consider his life in danger, and applied to Congress for a guard of Continental soldiers, "as no protection was to be expected from the authority of the State for an honest man."

He was told in reply that his application ought to have been made to the executive authority of Pennsylvania; "in whose disposition to protect every honest citizen, Congress had full confidence, *and highly disapproved the insinuation of every individual to the contrary.*"

For months, Arnold remained in this anxious and irritated state. His situation, he said, was cruel. His character would continue to suffer until he should be acquitted by a court-martial, and he would be effectually prevented from joining the army, which he wished to do as soon as his wounds would permit, that he might render the country every service in his power in this critical time. "For though I have been ungratefully treated," adds he, "I do not consider it as from my countrymen in general, but from a set of men, who, void of principle, are governed entirely by private interest."

At length, when the campaign was over, and the army had gone into winter quarters, the long-delayed court-martial was assembled at Morristown. Of the eight charges originally advanced against Arnold by the Pennsylvania council, four only came under cognizance of the court. Of two of these he was entirely acquitted. The remaining two were—

First. That while in the camp at Valley Forge, he, without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, or the sanction of the State government, had granted a written permission for a vessel

belonging to disaffected persons, to proceed from the port of Philadelphia, than in possession of the enemy, to any port of the United States.

Second. That, availing himself of his official authority, he had appropriated the public wagons of Pennsylvania, when called forth on a special emergency, to the transportation of private property, and that of persons who voluntarily remained with the enemy, and were deemed disaffected to the interests and independence of America.

In regard to the first of these charges, Arnold alleged that the person who applied for the protection of the vessel, had taken the oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania required by the laws; that he was not residing in Philadelphia at the time, but had applied on behalf of himself and a company, and that the intentions of that person and his associates with regard to the vessel and cargo appeared to be upright.

As to his having granted the permission without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, though present in the camp, Arnold alleged that it was customary in the army for general officers to grant passes and protections to inhabitants of the United States, friendly to the same, and that the protection was given in the present instance, to prevent the soldiery from plundering the vessel and cargo, coming from a place in possession of the enemy, until the proper authority could take cognizance of the matter.

In regard to the second charge, while it was proved that under his authority wagons had been so used, it was allowed in extenuation, that they had been employed at private expense, and without any design to defraud the public or impede the military service.

In regard to both charges, nothing fraudulent on the part of Arnold was proved, but the transactions involved in the first were pronounced irregular, and contrary to one of the articles of war; and in the second, imprudent and reprehensible, considering the high station occupied by the general at the time; and the court sentenced him to be reprimanded by the commander-in-chief. The sentence was confirmed by Congress on the 12th of February (1780).

We have forbore to go into all the particulars of this trial, but we have considered them attentively, discharging from our minds, as much as possible, all impressions produced by Arnold's subsequent history, and we are surprised to find, after the hostility manifested against him by the council of Pennsylvania, and their extraordinary measure to possess the public mind against him, how venial are the trespasses of which he stood convicted.

He may have given personal offense by his assuming vanity ; by the arrogant exercise of his military authority ; he may have displeased by his ostentation, and awakened distrust by his speculating propensities ; but as yet his patriotism was unquestioned. No turpitude had been proved against him ; his brilliant exploits shed a splendor round his name, and he appeared before the public, a soldier crippled in their service. All these should have pleaded in his favor, should have produced indulgence of his errors, and mitigated that animosity which he always contended had been the cause of his ruin.

The reprimand adjudged by the court-martial was administered by Washington with consummate delicacy. The following were his words, as repeated by M. de Marbois, the French secretary of legation :—

“ Our profession is the chastest of all : even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favor, so hard to be acquired. I reprehend you for having forgotten, that, in proportion as you had rendered yourself formidable to our enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment towards your fellow-citizens.

“ Exhibit anew those noble qualities which have placed you on the list of our most valued commanders. I will myself furnish you, as far as it may be in my power, with opportunities of regaining the esteem of your country.”

A reprimand so mild and considerate, accompanied by such high eulogiums and generous promises, might have had a favorable effect upon Arnold, had he been in a different frame of mind ; but he had persuaded himself that the court would incline in his favor and acquit him altogether, and he resented deeply a sentence, which he protested against as unmerited. His resentment was aggravated by delays in the settlement of his accounts, as he depended upon the sums he claimed as due to him, for the payment of debts by which he was harrassed. In following the matter up, he became a weary, and probably irritable, applicant at the halls of Congress, and, we are told, gave great offense to members by his importunity, while he wore out the patience of his friends ; but public bodies are prone to be offended by the importunity of baffled claimants, and the patience of friends is seldom proof against the reiterated story of a man's prolonged difficulties.

In the month of March, we find him intent on a new and adventurous project. He had proposed to the Board of Admiralty an expedition, requiring several ships of war and three or four hundred land troops, offering to take command of it should it

be carried into effect, as his wounds still disabled him from duty on land. Washington, who knew his abilities in either service, was disposed to favor his proposition, but the scheme fell through from the impossibility of sparing the requisite number of men from the army. What Arnold's ultimate designs might have been in seeking such a command, are rendered problematical by his subsequent conduct. On the failure of the project, he requested and obtained from Washington leave of absence from the army for the summer, there being, he said, little prospect of an active campaign, and his wounds unfitting him for the field.

CHAPTER LVIII.

SOUTH CAROLINA THREATENED.—ITS CONDITION AND POPULATION.—STORMY VOYAGE OF SIR HENRY CLINTON.—LOSS OF HORSES.—CHARACTER OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL TARLETON.—FLEET ARRIVES AT TYBEE.—SIR HENRY CLINTON ADVANCES UPON CHARLESTON.—LINCOLN PREPARES FOR DEFENSE.—COMMODORE WHIPPLE.—GOVERNOR RUTLEDGE.—FOREBODINGS OF WASHINGTON.—EMBARKATION OF BRITISH TROOPS AT NEW YORK.—WASHINGTON SENDS DE KALB WITH REINFORCEMENTS.—HIS HOPEFUL LETTER TO STEUBEN.

THE return of spring brought little alleviation to the sufferings of the army at Morristown. All means of supplying its wants or recruiting its ranks were paralyzed by the continued depreciation of the currency. While Washington saw his forces gradually diminishing, his solicitude was intensely excited for the safety of the Southern States. The reader will recall the departure from New York, in the latter part of December, of the fleet of Admiral Arbuthnot with the army of Sir Henry Clinton, destined for the subjugation of South Carolina. "The richness of the country," says Colonel Tarleton, in his history of the campaign, "its vicinity to Georgia, and its distance from General Washington, pointed out the advantage and facility of its conquest. While it would be an unspeakable loss to the Americans, the possession of it would tend to secure to the crown the southern part of the continent which stretches beyond it." It was presumed that the subjugation of it would be an easy task. The population was scanty for the extent of the country, and was made up of emigrants, or the descendants of emigrants, from various lands and of various

nations: Huguenots, who had emigrated from France after the revocation of the edict of Nantz; Germans, from the Palatinate; Irish Protestants, who had received grants of land from the crown; Scotch Highlanders, transported hither after the disastrous battle of Culloden; Dutch colonists, who had left New York, after its submission to England, and been settled here on bounty lands.

Some of these foreign elements might be hostile to British domination, but others would be favorable. There was a large class, too, that had been born or had passed much of their lives in England, who retained for it a filial affection, spoke of it as *home*, and sent their children to be educated there.

The number of slaves within the province and of savages on its western frontier, together with its wide extent of unprotected sea-coast, were encouragements to an invasion by sea and land. Little combination of militia and yeomanry need be apprehended from a population sparsely scattered, and where the settlements were widely separated by swamps and forests. Washington was in no condition to render prompt and effectual relief, his army being at a vast distance, and considered, as "in a great measure broken up." The British, on the contrary, had the advantage of their naval force, "there being nothing then in the American seas which could even venture to look at it." *

Such were some of the considerations which prompted the enemy to this expedition; and which gave Washington great anxiety concerning it.

General Lincoln was in command at Charleston, but uncertain as yet of the designs of the enemy, and at a loss what course to pursue. Diffident of himself, and accustomed to defer to the wisdom of Washington, he turns to him in his present perplexity. "It is among my misfortunes," writes he, modestly (January 23d), "that I am not near enough to your Excellency to have the advantage of your advice and direction. I feel my own insufficiency and want of experience. I can promise you nothing but a disposition to serve my country. If this town should be attacked, as now threatened, I know my duty will call me to defend it, as long as opposition can be of any avail. I hope my inclination will coincide with my duty."

The voyage of Sir Henry Clinton proved long and tempestuous. The ships were dispersed. Several fell into the hands of the Americans. One ordnance vessel foundered. Most of the artillery horses, and all those of the cavalry perished. The scattered ships rejoined each other about the end of January,

* *Ann. Register*, 1780, p. 217.

at Tybee Bay on Savannah River, where those that had sustained damage were repaired as speedily as possible. The loss of the cavalry horses was especially felt by Sir Henry. There was a corps of two hundred and fifty dragoons, on which he depended greatly in the kind of guerrilla warfare he was likely to pursue, in a country of forests and morasses. Lieutenant-colonel Banastre Tarleton who commanded them, was one of those dogs of war, which Sir Henry was prepared to let slip on emergencies, to scour and maraud the country. This "bold dragoon," so noted in Southern warfare, was about twenty-six years of age, of a swarthy complexion, with small, black, piercing eyes. He is described as being rather below the middle size, square-built and strong, "with large muscular legs." It will be found that he was a first-rate partisan officer, prompt, ardent, active, but somewhat unscrupulous.

Landing from the fleet, perfectly dismounted, he repaired with his dragoons, in some of the quartermaster's boats, to Port Royal Island, on the seaboard of South Carolina, "to collect at that place, from friends or enemies, by money or by force, all the horses belonging to the islands in the neighborhood." He succeeded in procuring horses, though of an inferior quality to those he had lost, but consoled himself with the persuasion that he would secure better ones in the course of the campaign, by "exertion and enterprise,"—a vague phrase, but very significant in the partisan vocabulary.

In the meantime the transports, having on board a great part of the army, sailed under convoy on the 10th of February, from Savannah to North Edisto Sound, where the troops disembarked on the 11th, on St. John's Island, about thirty miles below Charleston. Thence, Sir Henry Clinton set out for the banks of Ashley River, opposite to the city, while a part of the fleet proceeded round by sea, for the purpose of blockading the harbor. The advance of Sir Henry was slow and cautious. Much time was consumed by him in fortifying intermediate ports, to keep up a secure communication with the fleet. He ordered from Savannah all the troops that could be spared, and wrote to Knyphausen at New York, for reinforcements from that place. Every precaution was taken by him to insure against a second repulse from before Charleston, which might prove fatal to his military reputation.

General Lincoln took advantage of this slowness on the part of his assailant, to extend and strengthen the works. Charleston stands at the end of an isthmus formed by the Ashley and Cooper rivers. Beyond the main works on the land side he cut a canal, from one to the other of the swamps which border

these rivers. In advance of the canal were two rows of abatis and a double picketed ditch. Within the canal, and between it and the main works, were strong redoubts and batteries, to open a flanking fire on any approaching column, while an inclosed hornwork of masonry formed a kind of citadel.

A squadron commanded by Commodore Whipple, and composed of nine vessels of war, of various sizes, the largest mounting forty-four guns, was to coöperate with forts Moultrie and Johnston, and the various batteries, in the defense of the harbor. They were to lie before the bar so as to command the entrance of it. Great reliance also was placed on the bar itself, which it was thought no ship-of-the-line could pass.

Governor Rutledge, a man eminent for talents, patriotism, firmness, and decision, was clothed with dictatorial powers during the present crisis; he had called out the militia of the State, and it was supposed they would duly obey the call. Large reinforcements of troops also were expected from the North. Under all these circumstances, General Lincoln yielded to the entreaties of the inhabitants, and instead of remaining with his army in the open country as he had intended, shut himself up with them in the place for its defense, leaving merely his cavalry and two hundred light troops outside, who were to hover about the enemy and prevent small parties from marauding.

It was not until the 12th of March that Sir Henry Clinton effected his tardy approach, and took up a position on Charleston Neck, a few miles above the town. Admiral Arbuthnot soon showed an intention of introducing his ships into the harbor; barricading their waists, anchoring them in a situation where they might take advantage of the first favorable spring-tide, and fixing buoys on the bar for their guidance. Commodore Whipple had by this time ascertained by sounding that a wrong idea had prevailed of the depth of water in the harbor, and that his ships could not anchor nearer than within three miles of the bar, so that it would be impossible for him to defend the passage of it. He quitted his station within it, therefore, after having destroyed a part of the enemy's buoys, and took a position where his ships might be abreast, and form a cross-fire with the batteries of Fort Moultrie, where Colonel Pinckney commanded.

Washington was informed of these facts by letters from his former aide-de-camp, Colonel Laurens, who was in Charleston at the time. The information caused anxious forebodings. "The impracticability of defending the bar, I fear, amounts to the loss of the town and garrison," writes he in reply. "It really

appears to me, that the propriety of attempting to defend the town, depended on the probability of defending the bar, and that when this ceased, the attempt ought to have been relinquished." The same opinion was expressed by him in a letter to Baron Steuben; "but at this distance," adds he considerably, "we can form a very imperfect judgment of its propriety or necessity. I have the greatest reliance in General Lincoln's prudence, but I cannot forbear dreading the event."

His solicitude for the safety of the South was increased, by hearing of the embarkation at New York of two thousand five hundred British and Hessian troops, under Lord Rawdon, reinforcements for Sir Henry Clinton. It seemed evident the enemy intended to push their operations with vigor at the South; perhaps, to make it the principal theatre of the war. "We are now beginning," said Washington, "to experience the fatal consequences of the policy which delayed calling upon the States for their quotas of men in time to arrange and prepare them for the duties of the field. What to do for the Southern States, without involving consequences equally alarming in this quarter, I know not."

Gladly would he have hastened to the South in person, but at this moment his utmost vigilance was required to keep watch upon New York and maintain the security of the Hudson, the vital part of the confederacy. The weak state of the American means of warfare in both quarters, presented a choice of difficulties. The South needed support. Could the North give it without exposing itself to ruin, since the enemy, by means of their ships, could suddenly unite their forces, and fall upon any point that they might consider weak? Such were the perplexities to which he was continually subjected, in having, with scanty means, to provide for the security of a vast extent of country, and with land forces merely, to contend with an amphibious enemy.

"Congress will better conceive in how delicate a situation we stand," writes he, "when I inform them, that the whole operating force present on this and the other side of the North River, amounts only to ten thousand four hundred rank and file, of which about two thousand eight hundred will have completed their term of service by the last of May; while the enemy's regular force at New York and its dependencies, must amount, upon a moderate calculation, to about eleven thousand rank and file. Our situation is more critical from the impossibility of concentrating our force, as well for the want of the means of taking the field, as on account of the early period of the season."*

* Letter to the President, April 2d.

Looking, however, as usual, to the good of the whole Union, he determined to leave something at hazard in the Middle States, where the country was internally so strong, and yield further succor to the Southern States, which had not equal military advantages. With the consent of Congress, therefore, he put the Maryland line under marching orders, together with the Delaware regiment, which acted with it and the first regiment of artillery.

The Baron de Kalb, now at the head of the Maryland division, was instructed to conduct this detachment with all haste to the aid of General Lincoln. He might not arrive in time to prevent the fall of Charleston, but he might assist to arrest the progress of the enemy and save the Carolinas.

Washington had been put upon his guard of late against intrigues, forming by members of the old Conway Cabal, who intended to take advantage of every military disaster to destroy confidence in him. His steady mind, however, was not to be shaken by suspicion. "Against intrigues of this kind incident to every man of a public station," said he, "his best support will be a faithful discharge of his duty, and he must rely on the justice of his country for the event."

His feelings at the present juncture are admirably expressed in a letter to the Baron de Steuben. "The prospect, my dear Baron, is gloomy, and the storm threatens, but I hope we shall extricate ourselves, and bring everything to a prosperous issue. I have been so inured to difficulties, in the course of this contest, that I have learned to look upon them with more tranquillity than formerly. Those which now present themselves, no doubt require vigorous exertions to overcome them, *and I am far from despairing of doing it.*" *

* *Washington's Writings*, vii. 10.

CHAPTER LIX.

EVILS OF THE CONTINENTAL CURRENCY.—MILITARY REFORMS PROPOSED BY WASHINGTON.—CONGRESS JEALOUS OF MILITARY POWER.—COMMITTEE OF THREE SENT TO CONFER WITH WASHINGTON.—LOSSES BY DEPRECIATION OF THE CURRENCY TO BE MADE GOOD TO THE TROOPS.—ARRIVAL OF LAFAYETTE.—SCHEME FOR A COMBINED ATTACK UPON NEW YORK.—ARNOLD HAS DEBTS AND DIFFICULTIES.—HIS PROPOSALS TO THE FRENCH MINISTER.—ANXIOUS TO RETURN TO THE ARMY.—MUTINY OF THE CONNECTICUT TROOPS.—WASHINGTON WRITES TO REED FOR AID FROM PENNSYLVANIA.—GOOD EFFECTS OF HIS LETTER.

WE have cited the depreciation of the currency as a main cause of the difficulties and distresses of the army. The troops were paid in paper money at its nominal value. A memorial of the officers of the Jersey line to the legislature of their State, represented the depreciation to be so great, that four months' pay of a private soldier would not procure for his family a single bushel of wheat; the pay of a colonel would not purchase oats for his horse, and a common laborer or express rider could earn four times the pay in paper of an American officer.

Congress, too, in its exigencies, being destitute of the power of levying taxes, which vested in the State governments, devolved upon those governments, in their separate capacities, the business of supporting the army. This produced a great inequality in the condition of the troops; according to the means and the degree of liberality of their respective States. Some States furnished their troops amply, not only with clothing, but with many comforts and conveniences; others were more contracted in their supplies; while others left their troops almost destitute. Some of the States, too, undertook to make good to their troops the loss in their pay caused by the depreciation of the currency. As this was not general, it increased the inequality of condition. Those who fared worse than others were incensed, not only against their own State, but against the confederacy. They were disgusted with a service that made such injurious distinctions. Some of the officers resigned, finding it impossible, under actual circumstances, to maintain an appearance suitable to their rank. The men had

not this resource. They murmured and showed a tendency to seditious combinations.

These, and other defects in the military system, were pressed by Washington upon the attention of Congress in a letter to the president: "It were devoutly to be wished," observed he, "that a plan could be devised by which everything relating to the army could be conducted on a general principle, under the direction of Congress. This alone can give harmony and consistency to our military establishment, and I am persuaded it will be infinitely conducive to public economy." *

In consequence of this letter it was proposed in Congress to send a committee of three of its members to head-quarters to consult with the commander-in-chief, and, in conjunction with him, to effect such reforms and changes in the various departments of the army as might be deemed necessary. Warm debates ensued. It was objected that this would put too much power into a few hands, and especially into those of the commander-in-chief: "*that his influence was already too great; that even his virtues afforded motives for alarm; that the enthusiasm of the army, joined to the kind of dictatorship already confided to him, put Congress and the United States at his mercy; that it was not expedient to expose a man of the highest virtues to such temptations.*" †

The foregoing passage from a despatch of the French minister to his government, is strongly illustrative of the cautious jealousy still existing in Congress with regard to military power, even though wielded by Washington.

After a prolonged debate, a committee of three was chosen by ballot; it consisted of General Schuyler and Messrs. John Mathews and Nathaniel Peabody. It was a great satisfaction to Washington to have his old friend and coadjutor, Schuyler, near him in this capacity, in which, he declared, no man could be more useful, "from his perfect knowledge of the resources of the country, the activity of his temper, his fruitfulness of expedients, and his sound military sense." ‡

The committee, on arriving at the camp, found the disastrous state of affairs had not been exaggerated. For five months the army had been unpaid. Every department was destitute of money or credit; there were rarely provisions for six days in advance; on some occasions the troops had been for several successive days without meat; there was no forage; the medical department had neither tea, chocolate, wine, nor spirituous liquors of any kind. "Yet the men," said Washington, "have

* *Washington's Writings*, Sparks vol. vii. p. ii.

† *Ibid.*, vii. p. 15.

‡ Washington to James Duane, Sparks, vii. 34.

borne their distress in general, with a firmness and patience never exceeded, and every commendation is due to the officers for encouraging them to it by exhortation and example. They have suffered equally with the men, and, their relative situations considered, rather more." Indeed, we have it from another authority, that many officers for some time lived on bread and cheese, rather than take any of the scanty allowance of meat from the men.*

To soothe the discontents of the army, and counteract the alarming effects of the currency, Congress now adopted the measure already observed by some of the States, and engaged to make good to the continental and independent troops the difference in the value of their pay caused by this depreciation; and that all moneys or other articles heretofore received by them, should be considered as advanced on account, and comprehended at their just value in the final settlement.

At this gloomy crisis came a letter from the Marquis de Lafayette, dated April 27th, announcing his arrival at Boston. Washington's eyes, we are told, were suffused with tears as he read this most welcome epistle, and the warmth with which he replied to it, showed his affectionate regard for this young nobleman. "I received your letter," writes he, "with all the joy that the sincerest friendship could dictate, and with that impatience which an ardent desire to see you could not fail to inspire. . . . I most sincerely congratulate you on your safe arrival in America, and shall embrace you with all the warmth of an affectionate friend when you come to head-quarters, where a bed is prepared for you."

He would immediately have sent a troop of horse to escort the marquis through the tory settlements between Morristown and the Hudson, had he known the route he intended to take; the latter, however, arrived safe at head-quarters on the 12th of May, where he was welcomed with acclamations, for he was popular with both officers and soldiers. Washington folded him in his arms in a truly parental embrace, and they were soon closeted together to talk over the state of affairs, when Lafayette made known the result of his visit to France. His generous efforts at court had been crowned with success, and he brought the animating intelligence that a French fleet, under the Chevalier de Ternay, was to put to sea early in April, bring a body of troops under the Count de Rochambeau, and might soon be expected on the coast to coöperate with the American forces; this, however, he was at liberty to make known only to Washington and Congress.

* Gen. William Laine to Joseph Reed. Reed's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p.

Remaining but a single day at head-quarters, he hastened on to the seat of government, where he met the reception which his generous enthusiasm in the cause of American Independence had so fully merited. Congress, in a resolution on the 16th of May, pronounced his return to America to resume his command a fresh proof of the disinterested zeal and persevering attachment which had secured him the public confidence and applause, and received with pleasure a "tender of the further services of so gallant and meritorious an officer."

Within three days after the departure of the marquis from Morristown, Washington, in a letter to him, gave his idea of the plan which it would be proper for the French fleet and army to pursue on their arrival upon the coast. The reduction of New York he considered the first enterprise to be attempted by the coöperating forces. The whole effective land force of the enemy he estimated at about eight thousand regulars and four thousand refugees, with some militia, on which no great dependence could be placed. Their naval force consisted of one seventy-four gun ship, and three or four small frigates. In this situation of affairs the French fleet might enter the harbor and gain possession of it without difficulty, cut off its communications, and, with the coöperation of the American army, oblige the city to capitulate. He advised Lafayette, therefore, to write to the French commanders, urging them on their arrival on the coast, to proceed with their land and naval forces, with all expedition, to Sandy Hook, and there await further advices; should they learn, however, that the expedition under Sir Henry Clinton had returned from the South to New York, they were to proceed to Rhode Island.

General Arnold was at this time in Philadelphia, and his connection with subsequent events requires a few words concerning his career, daily becoming more perplexed. He had again petitioned Congress on the subject of his accounts. The Board of Treasury had made a report far short of his wishes. He had appealed, and his appeal, together with all the documents connected with the case, was referred to a committee of three. The old doubts and difficulties continued: there was no prospect of a speedy settlement; he was in extremity. The French minister, M. de Luzerne, was at hand; a generous-spirited man who had manifested admiration of his military character. To him Arnold now repaired in his exigency; made a passionate representation of the hardships of his case; the inveterate hostility he had experienced from Pennsylvania; the ingratitude of his country; the disorder brought into his private affairs by the war, and the necessity he should be

driven to of abandoning his profession, unless he could borrow a sum equal to the amount of his debts. Such a loan, he intimated, it might be the interest of the king of France to grant, thereby securing the attachment and gratitude of an American general of his rank and influence.

The French minister was too much of a diplomatist not to understand the bearing of the intimation, but he shrank from it, observing that the service required would degrade both parties.

"When the envoy of a foreign power," said he, "gives, or if you will, lends money, it is ordinarily to corrupt those who receive it, and to make them the creatures of the sovereign whom he serves; or rather, he corrupts without persuading; he buys and does not secure. But the league entered into between the king and the United States, is the work of justice and of the wisest policy. It has for its basis a reciprocal interest and good-will. In the mission with which I am charged, my true glory consists in fulfilling it without intrigue or cabal; without resorting to any secret practices, and by the force alone of the conditions of the alliance."

M. de Luzerne endeavored to soften this repulse and reproof by complimenting Arnold on the splendor of his past career, and by alluding to the field of glory still before him; but the pressure of debts was not to be lightened by compliments, and Arnold retired from the interview, a mortified and desperate man.

He was in this mood when he heard of the expected arrival of aid from France, and the talk of an active campaign. It seemed as if his military ambition was once more aroused. To General Schuyler, who was about to visit the camp as one of the committee, he wrote on the 25th of May, expressing a determination to rejoin the army, although his wounds still made it painful to walk or ride, and intimated, that, in his present condition, the command at West Point would be best suited to him.

In reply, General Schuyler wrote from Morristown, June 2d, that he had put Arnold's letter into Washington's hands, and added: "He expressed a desire to do whatever was agreeable to you: dwelt on your abilities, your merits, your sufferings, and on the well-earned claims you have on your country, and intimated, that as soon as his arrangements for the campaign should take place, he would properly consider you."

In the meantime, the army with which Washington was to coöperate in the projected attack upon New York, was so re-

duced by the departure of troops whose term had expired, and the tardiness in furnishing recruits, that it did not amount quite to four thousand rank and file, fit for duty. Among these was a prevalent discontent. Their pay was five months in arrear; if now paid, it would be in Continental currency, without allowance for depreciation, consequently, almost worthless for present purposes.

A long interval of scarcity and several days of actual famine, brought matters to a crisis. On the 15th of May, in the dusk of the evening, two regiments of the Connecticut line assembled on their parade by beat of drum, and declared their intention to march home bag and baggage, "or, at best, to gain subsistence at the point of the bayonet." Colonel Meigs, while endeavoring to suppress the mutiny, was struck by one of the soldiers. Some officers of the Pennsylvania line came to his assistance, parading their regiments. Every argument and expostulation was used with the mutineers. They were reminded of their past good conduct, of the noble objects for which they were contending, and of the future indemnifications promised by Congress. Their answer was, that their sufferings were too great to be allayed by promises, in which they had little faith; they wanted present relief, and some present substantial recompense for their services.

It was with difficulty they could be prevailed upon to return to their huts. Indeed, a few turned out a second time, with their packs, and were not to be pacified. These were arrested and confined.

This mutiny, Washington declared, had given him infinitely more concern than anything that had ever happened, especially as he had no means of paying the troops excepting in Continental money, which, said he, "is evidently impracticable from the immense quantity it would require to pay them as much as would make up the depreciation." His uneasiness was increased by finding that printed handbills were secretly disseminated in his camp by the enemy, containing addresses to the soldiery, persuading them to desert.*

In this alarming state of destitution, Washington looked around anxiously for bread for his famishing troops. New York, Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, were what he termed his "flour country." Virginia was sufficiently tasked to supply the South. New York, by legislative coercion, had already given all that she could spare from the subsistence of her inhabitants. Jersey was exhausted by the long residence

* Letter to the President of Cong., May 27. Sparks, vii. 54.

of the army. Maryland had made great exertions, and might still do something more, and Delaware might contribute handsomely, in proportion to her extent: but Pennsylvania was now the chief dependence, for that State was represented to be full of flour. Washington's letter of the 16th of December, to President Reed, had obtained temporary relief from that quarter; he now wrote to him a second time, and still more earnestly, "Every idea you can form of our distresses, will fall short of the reality. There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery, that it begins at length to be worn out, and we see in every line of the army, features of mutiny and sedition. All our departments, all our operations, are at a stand, and unless a system very different from that which has a long time prevailed be immediately adopted throughout the States, our affairs must soon become desperate beyond the possibility of recovery."

Nothing discouraged Washington more than the lethargy that seemed to deaden the public mind. He speaks of it with a degree of despondency scarcely ever before exhibited. "I have almost ceased to hope. The country is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interests that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better." And again, "The present juncture is so interesting, that if it does not produce corresponding exertions, it will be a proof that motives of honor, public good, and even self-preservation, have lost their influence on our minds. This is a decisive moment; one of the most, I will go further, and say, *the* most important America has seen. The court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance, and if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind, nor can we after that venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what, it will appear, we want inclination or ability to assist them in." With these and similar observations, he sought to rouse President Reed to extraordinary exertions. "This is a time," writes he, "to hazard and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity and give it their support." He urges Reed to press upon the Legislature of Pennsylvania the policy of investing its executive with plenipotentary powers. "I should then," writes he, "expect everything from your ability and zeal. This is no time for formality or ceremony. The crisis in every point of view is extraordinary, and extraordinary expedients are necessary. I am decided in this opinion."

His letter procured relief for the army from the legislature,

and a resolve empowering the president and council, during its recess, to declare martial law should circumstances render it expedient. "This," observes Reed, "gives us a power of doing what may be necessary without attending to the ordinary course of law, and we shall endeavor to exercise it with prudence and moderation." *

In like manner Washington endeavored to rouse the dormant fire of Congress, and impart to it his own indomitable energy. "Certain I am," writes he to a member of that body, "unless Congress speak in a more decisive tone, unless they are vested with powers by the several States, competent to the purposes of war, or assume them as matters of right, and they and the States respectively act with more energy than they have hitherto done, that our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill-timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies, we incur enormous expenses and derive no benefit from them. One State will comply with a requisition of Congress; another neglects to do it; a third executes it by halves; and all differ, either in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up-hill; and, while such a system as the present one, or rather want of one, prevails, we shall ever be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage—I see one head gradually changing into thirteen, I see one army branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, are considering themselves dependent on their respective States. In a word, I see the powers of Congress declining too fast for the consideration and respect which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and I am fearful of the consequences." †

At this juncture came official intelligence from the South, to connect which with the general course of events, requires a brief notice of the operations of Sir Henry Clinton in that quarter.

* Sparks, *Corr. of the Rev.*, vol. ii. p. 466.

† Letter to Joseph Jones. Sparks, vii. 67.

CHAPTER LX.

SIEGE OF CHARLESTON CONTINUED.—BRITISH SHIPS ENTER THE HARBOR.—BRITISH TROOPS MARCH FROM SAVANNAH.—TARLETON AND HIS DRAGOONS.—HIS BRUSH WITH COLONEL WASHINGTON.—CHARLESTON REINFORCED BY WOODFORD.—TARLETON'S EXPLOITS AT MONK'S CORNER.—AT LENEAU'S FERRY.—SIR HENRY CLINTON REINFORCED.—CHARLESTON CAPITULATES.—AFFAIR OF TARLETON AND BUFORD ON THE WAXHAW.—SIR HENRY CLINTON EMBARKS FOR NEW YORK.

IN a preceding chapter we left the British fleet under Admiral Arbuthnot, preparing to force its way into the harbor of Charleston. Several days elapsed before the ships were able, by taking out their guns, provisions, and water, and availing themselves of wind and tide, to pass the bar. They did so on the 20th of March, with but slight opposition from several galleys. Commodore Whipple, then, seeing the vast superiority of their force, made a second retrograde move, stationing some of his ships in Cooper River, and sinking the rest at its mouth so as to prevent the enemy from running up that river, and cutting off communication with the country on the east: the crews and heavy cannon were landed to aid in the defense of the town.

The reinforcements expected from the North were not yet arrived; the militia of the State did not appear at Governor Rutledge's command, and other reliances were failing. "Many of the North Carolina militia whose terms have expired leave us to-day," writes Lincoln to Washington, on the 20th of March. "They cannot be persuaded to remain longer, though the enemy are in our neighborhood." *

At this time the reinforcements which Sir Henry Clinton had ordered from Savannah were marching toward the Cambayee under Brigadier-general Patterson. On his flank moved Major Ferguson with a corps of riflemen, and Major Cochrane with the infantry of the British legion, two brave and enterprising officers. It was a toilsome march, through swamps and difficult passes. Being arrived in the neighborhood of Port Royal, where Tarleton had succeeded, though indiffer-

* *Correspondence of the Rev., vol. ii. p. 419.*

ently, in remounting his dragoons, Patterson sent orders to that officer to join him. Tarleton hastened to obey the order. His arrival was timely. The Carolina militia having heard that all the British horses had perished at sea, made an attack on the front of General Patterson's force, supposing it to be without cavalry. To their surprise, Tarleton charged them with his dragoons, routed them, took several prisoners, and, what was more acceptable, a number of horses, some of the militia, he says, "being accoutred as cavaliers."

Tarleton had soon afterwards to encounter a worthy antagonist in Colonel William Washington, the same cavalry officer who had distinguished himself at Trenton, and was destined to distinguish himself still more in this Southern campaign. He is described as being six feet in height, broad, stout, and corpulent. Bold in the field, careless in the camp, kind to his soldiers, harassing to his enemies, gay and good-humored, with an upright heart and a generous hand, a universal favorite. He was now at the head of a body of continental cavalry, consisting of his own and Bland's light horse, and Pulaski's hussars. A brush took place in the neighborhood of Rantoul's Bridge. Colonel Washington had the advantage, took several prisoners, and drove back the dragoons of the British legion, but durst not pursue them for want of infantry.*

On the 7th of April, Brigadier-general Woodford with seven hundred Virginia troops, after a forced march of five hundred miles in thirty days, crossed from the east side of Cooper River by the only passage now open, and threw himself into Charleston. It was a timely reinforcement, and joyfully welcomed; for the garrison, when in greatest force, amounted to a little more than two thousand regulars and one thousand North Carolina militia.

About the same time Admiral Arbuthnot, in the *Roebuck*, passed Sullivan's Island, with a fresh southerly breeze, at the head of a squadron of seven armed vessels and two transports. "It was a magnificent spectacle, satisfactory to the royalists," writes the admiral. The whigs regarded it with a rueful eye. Colonel Pinckney opened a heavy cannonade from the batteries of Fort Moultrie. The ships thundered in reply, and clouds of smoke were raised, under the cover of which they slipped by, with no greater loss than twenty-seven men killed and wounded. A store-ship which followed the squadron ran aground, was set on fire and abandoned, and subsequently blew up. The ships took a position near Fort Johnston, just without the range of

* Gordon, vol. iii. p. 352; see also Tarleton, *Hist. Campaign*, p. 8.

the shot from the American batteries. After the passage of the ships, Colonel Pinckney and a part of the garrison withdrew from Fort Moultrie.

The enemy had by this time completed his first parallel, and the town being almost entirely invested by sea and land, received a joint summons from the British general and admiral to surrender. "Sixty days have passed," writes Lincoln in reply, "since it has been known that your intentions against this town were hostile, in which time has been afforded to abandon it, but duty and inclination point to the propriety of supporting it to the last extremity."

The British batteries were now opened. The siege was carried on deliberately by regular parallels, and on a scale of magnitude scarcely warranted by the moderate strength of the place. A great object with the besieged was to keep open the channel of communication with the country by the Cooper River, the last that remained by which they could receive reinforcements and supplies, or could retreat, if necessary. For this purpose, Governor Rutledge, leaving the town in the care of Lieutenant-governor Gadsden, and one half of the executive council, set off with the other half, and endeavored to rouse the militia between the Cooper and Santee rivers. His success was extremely limited. Two militia posts were established by him, one between these rivers, the other at a ferry on the Santee; some regular troops, also, had been detached by Lincoln to throw up works about nine miles above the town, on the Wando, a branch of Cooper River, and at Lempriere's Point; and Brigadier-general Huger,* with a force of militia and continental cavalry, including those of Colonel William Washington, was stationed at Monk's Corner, about thirty miles above Charleston, to guard the passes at the head waters of Cooper River.

Sir Henry Clinton, when proceeding with his second parallel, detached Lieutenant-colonel Webster with fourteen hundred men to break up these posts. The most distant one was that of Huger's Cavalry at Monk's Corner. The surprisal of this was entrusted to Tarleton, who, with his dragoons, was in Webster's advanced guard. He was to be seconded by Major Patrick Ferguson with his riflemen.

Ferguson was a fit associate for Tarleton, in hardy, scrambling, partisan enterprise; equally intrepid, and determined, but cooler and more open to impulses of humanity. He was the son of an eminent Scotch judge, had entered the army at an early age and served in the German wars. The British extolled him

* Pronounced Huger—of French Huguenot descent.

as superior to the American Indians, in the use of the rifle; in short as being the best marksman living. He had invented one which could be loaded at the breech and discharged seven times in a minute. It had been used with effect by his corps. Washington, according to British authority, had owed his life at the battle of Germantown, solely to Ferguson's ignorance of his person, having repeatedly been within reach of the major's unerring rifle.*

On the evening of the 13th of April, Tarleton moved with the van toward Monk's Corner. A night march had been judged the most advisable. It was made in profound silence and by unfrequented roads. In the course of the march a negro was descried attempting to avoid notice. He was seized. A letter was found on him from an officer in Huger's camp, from which Tarleton learned something of its situation and the distribution of the troops. A few dollars gained the services of the negro as a guide. The surprisal of General Huger's camp was complete. Several officers and men who attempted to defend themselves, were killed or wounded. General Huger, Colonel Washington, with many others, officers and men, escaped in the darkness, to the neighboring swamps. One hundred officers, dragoons, and hussars, were taken, with about four hundred horses and near fifty wagons, laden with arms, clothing and ammunition.

Biggin's Bridge on Cooper River was likewise secured, and the way opened for Colonel Webster to advance nearly to the head of the passes, in such a manner as to shut up Charleston entirely.

In the course of the maraud which generally accompanies a surprisal of the kind, several dragoons of the British legion broke into a house in the neighborhood of Monk's Corner, and maltreated and attempted violence upon ladies residing there. The ladies escaped to Monk's Corner, where they were protected, and a carriage furnished to convey them to a place of safety. The dragoons were apprehended and brought to Monk's Corner, where by this time Colonel Webster had arrived. Major Ferguson, we are told, was for putting the dragoons to instant death, but Colonel Webster did not think his powers warranted such a measure. "They were sent to head-quarters," adds the historian, "and, I believe; afterwards tried and whipped." †

We gladly record one instance in which the atrocities which

* *Annual Register*, 1781, p. 52.

† *Stedman*, ii. 183.

disgraced this invasion met with some degree of punishment; and we honor the rough soldier, Ferguson, for the fiat of "instant death," with which he would have requited the most infamous and dastardly outrage that brutalizes warfare.

During the progress of the siege, General Lincoln held repeated councils of war, in which he manifested a disposition to evacuate the place. This measure was likewise urged by General Du Portail, who had penetrated, by secret ways, into the town. The inhabitants, however, in an agony of alarm, implored Lincoln not to abandon them to the mercies of an infuriated and licentious soldiery, and the general, easy and kind-hearted, yielded to their entreaties.

The American cavalry had gradually reassembled on the north of the Santee, under Colonel White of New Jersey, where they were joined by some militia infantry, and by Colonel William Washington, with such of his dragoons as had escaped at Monk's Corner. Cornwallis had committed the country between Cooper and Wando Rivers to Tarleton's charge, with orders to be continually on the move with the cavalry and infantry of the legion; to watch over the landing-places; obtain intelligence from the town, the Santee River, and the back country, and to burn such stores as might fall into his hands, rather than risk their being retaken by the enemy.

Hearing of the fortuitous assemblage of American troops, Tarleton came suddenly upon them by surprise at Laneau's Ferry. It was one of his bloody exploits. Five officers and thirty-six men were killed and wounded, and seven officers and six dragoons taken, with horses, arms, and equipments. Colonels White, Washington, and Jamieson, with other officers and men, threw themselves into the river, and escaped by swimming; while some, who followed their example, perished.

The arrival of a reinforcement of three thousand men from New York enabled Sir Henry to throw a powerful detachment, under Lord Cornwallis, to the east of Cooper River, to complete the investment of the town and cut off all retreat. Fort Moultrie surrendered. The batteries of the third parallel were opened upon the town. They were so near, that the Hessian yagers, or sharp-shooters, could pick off the garrison while at their guns or on the parapets. This fire was kept up for two days. The besiegers crossed the canal; pushed up a double sap to the inside of the abatis, and prepared to make an assault by sea and land.

All hopes of successful defense were at an end. The works were in ruins; the guns almost all dismounted; the garrison exhausted with fatigue, the provisions nearly consumed. The

inhabitants, dreading the horrors of an assault, joined in a petition to General Lincoln, and prevailed upon him to offer a surrender on terms which had already been offered and rejected. These terms were still granted, and the capitulation was signed on the 12th of May. The garrison were allowed some of the honors of war. They were to march out and deposit their arms, between the canal and the works, but the drums were not to beat a British march nor the colors to be uncased. The continental troops and seamen were allowed their baggage, but were to remain prisoners of war. The officers of the army and navy were to retain their servants, swords, and pistols, and their baggage unsearched; and were permitted to sell their horses; but not to remove them out of the town. The citizens and the militia were to be considered prisoners on parole; the latter to be permitted to return home, and both to be protected in person and property as long as they kept their parole. Among the prisoners were the lieutenant-governor and five of the council.

The loss of the British in the siege was seventy-six killed and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded; that of the Americans nearly the same. The prisoners taken by the enemy, exclusive of the sailors, amounted to five thousand six hundred and eighteen men; comprising every male adult in the city. The continental troops did not exceed two thousand, five hundred of whom were in the hospital; the rest were citizens and militia.

Sir Henry Clinton considered the fall of Charleston decisive of the fate of South Carolina. To complete the subjugation of the country, he planned three expeditions into the interior. One, under Lieutenant-colonel Brown, was to move up the Savannah River to Augusta, on the borders of Georgia. Another, under Lieutenant-colonel Cruger, was to proceed up the southwest side of the Santee River to the district of Ninety-Six,* a fertile and salubrious region, between the Savannah and the Saluda rivers: while a third, under Cornwallis, was to cross the Santee, march up the northeast bank, and strike at a corps of troops under Colonel Buford, which were retreating to North Carolina with artillery and a number of wagons, laden with arms, ammunition, and clothing.

Colonel Buford, in fact, had arrived too late for the relief of Charleston, and was now making a retrograde move; he had come on with three hundred and eighty troops of the Virginia line, and two field-pieces, and had been joined by Colonel Washington with a few of his cavalry that had survived the

*So called in early times from being ninety-six miles from the principal town of the Cherokee nation.

surprisal by Tarleton. As Buford was moving with celerity, and had the advantage of distance, Cornwallis detached Tarleton in pursuit of him, with one hundred and seventy dragoons, a hundred mounted infantry and a three-pounder. The bold partisan pushed forward with his usual ardor and rapidity. The weather was sultry, many of his horses gave out through fatigue and heat; he pressed others by the way, leaving behind such of his troops as could not keep pace with him. After a day and night of forced march, he arrived about dawn at Rugeley's Mills. Buford, he was told, was about twenty miles in advance of him, pressing on with all diligence to join another corps of Americans. Tarleton continued his march; the horses of the three-pounder were knocked up and unable to proceed; his wearied troops were continually dropping in the rear. Still he urged forward, anxious to overtake Buford before he could form a junction with the force he was seeking. To detain him he sent forward Captain Kinlock of his legion with a flag, and the following letter:—

"SIR,—Resistance being vain, to prevent the effusion of blood, I make offers which can never be repeated. You are now almost encompassed by a corps of seven hundred light troops on horseback; half of that number are infantry with cannons. Earl Cornwallis is likewise within reach with nine British regiments. I warn you of the temerity of further inimical proceedings."

He concluded by offering the same conditions granted to the troops at Charleston; "if you are rash enough to reject them," added he, "the blood be upon your head."

Kinlock overtook Colonel Buford in full march on the banks of the Waxhaw, a stream on the border of North Carolina, and delivered the summons. The colonel read the letter without coming to a halt, detaining the flag for some time in conversation, and then returned the following note:—

"SIR,—I reject your proposals, and shall defend myself to the last extremity.

"I have the honor," etc.

Tarleton, who had never ceased to press forward, came upon Buford's rear-guard about three o'clock in the afternoon, and captured a sergeant and four dragoons. Buford had not expected so prompt an approach of the enemy. He hastily drew up his men in order of battle, in an open wood, on the right of the road. His artillery and wagons, which were in the advance

escorted by part of his infantry, were ordered to continue on their march.

There appears to have been some confusion on the part of the Americans, and they had an impetuous foe to deal with. Before they were well prepared for action they were attacked in front and on both flanks by cavalry and mounted infantry. Tarleton, who advanced at the head of thirty chosen dragoons and some infantry, states that when within fifty paces of the continental infantry, they presented, but he heard their officers command them to retain their fire until the British cavalry were nearer. It was not until the latter were within ten yards that there was a partial discharge of musketry. Several of the dragoons suffered by this fire. Tarleton himself was unhorsed, but his troopers rode on. The American battalion was broken; most of the men threw down their arms and begged for quarter, but were cut down without mercy. One hundred and thirteen were slain on the spot, and one hundred and fifty so mangled and maimed that they could not be removed. Colonel Buford and a few of the cavalry escaped, as did about a hundred of the infantry, who were with the baggage in the advance. Fifty prisoners were all that were in a condition to be carried off by Tarleton as trophies of this butchery.

The whole British loss was two officers and three privates killed, and one officer and fourteen privates wounded. What, then, could excuse this horrible carnage of an almost prostrate enemy? We give Tarleton's own excuse for it. It commenced, he says, at the time he was dismounted, and before he could mount another horse; and his cavalry were exasperated by a report that he was slain. Cornwallis apparently accepted this excuse, for he approved of his conduct in the expedition, and recommended him as worthy of some distinguished mark of royal favor. The world at large, however, have not been so easily satisfied, and the massacre at the Waxhaw has remained a sanguinary stain on the reputation of that impetuous soldier.

The two other detachments which had been sent out by Clinton, met with nothing but submission. The people in general, considering resistance hopeless, accepted the proffered protection, and conformed to its humiliating terms. One class of the population in this colony seems to have regarded the invaders as deliverers. "All the negroes," writes Tarleton, "men, women, and children, upon the appearance of any detachment of king's troops, thought themselves absolved from all respect to their American masters, and entirely released from servitude. They quitted the plantations and followed the army." *

* Tarleton's *Hist. of Campaign*, p. 89.

Sir Henry now persuaded himself that South Carolina was subdued, and proceeded to station garrisons in various parts, to maintain it in subjection. In the fullness of his confidence, he issued a proclamation on the 3d of June, discharging all the military prisoners from their paroles after the 20th of the month, excepting those captured in Fort Moultrie and Charleston. All thus released from their parole were reinstated in the rights and duties of British subjects; but, at the same time, they were bound to take an active part in support of the government hitherto opposed by them. Thus the protection afforded them while prisoners was annulled by an arbitrary fiat—neutrality was at an end, All were to be ready to take up arms at a moment's notice. Those who had families were to form a militia for home defense. Those who had none, were to serve with the royal forces. All who should neglect to return to their allegiance, or should refuse to take up arms against the independence of their country were to be considered as rebels and treated accordingly.

Having struck a blow, which, as he conceived, was to insure the subjugation of the South, Sir Henry embarked for New York on the 5th of June, with a part of his forces, leaving the residue under the command of Lord Cornwallis, who was to carry the war into North Carolina, and thence into Virginia.

CHAPTER LXI.

KNYPHAUSEN MARAUDS THE JERSEYS.—SACKING OF CONNECTICUT FARMS.—MURDER OF MRS. CALDWELL.—ARRIVAL AND MOVEMENTS OF SIR HENRY CLINTON.—SPRINGFIELD BURNT.—THE JERSEYS EVACUATED.

A **HANDBILL** published by the British authorities in New York, reached Washington's camp on the 1st of June, and made known the surrender of Charleston. A person from Amboy reported, moreover, that on the 30th of May he had seen one hundred sail of vessels enter Sandy Hook. These might bring Sir Henry Clinton with the whole or part of his force. In that case, flushed with his recent success, he might proceed immediately up the Hudson, and make an attempt upon West Point, in the present distressed condition of the garrison. So thinking, Washington wrote to General Howe, who commanded that

important post, to put him on his guard, and took measures to have him furnished with supplies.

The report concerning the fleet proved to be erroneous, but on the 6th of June came a new alarm. The enemy, it was said, were actually landing in force at Elizabethtown Point, to carry fire and sword into the Jerseys !

It was even so. Knyphausen, through spies and emissaries, had received exaggerated accounts of the recent outbreak in Washington's camp, and of the general discontent among the people of New Jersey ; and was persuaded that a sudden show of military protection, following up the news of the capture of Charleston, would produce a general desertion among Washington's troops, and rally back the inhabitants of the Jerseys to their allegiance to the crown.

In this belief he projected a descent into the Jerseys with about five thousand men, and some light artillery, who were to cross in divisions in the night of the 5th of June from Staten Island to Elizabethtown Point.

The first division, led by Brigadier-general Sterling, actually landed before dawn of the 6th, and advanced as silently as possible. The heavy and measured tramp of the troops, however, caught the ear of an American sentinel stationed at a fork where the roads from the old and new point joined. He challenged the dimly descried mass as it approached, and receiving no answer, fired into it. That shot wounded General Sterling in the thigh, and ultimately proved mortal. The wounded general was carried back, and Knyphausen took his place.

This delayed the march until sunrise, and gave time for the troops of the Jersey line, under Colonel Elias Dayton, stationed in Elizabethtown, to assemble. They were too weak in numbers, however, to withstand the enemy, but retreated in good order, skirmishing occasionally. The invading force passed through the village ; in the advance, a squadron of dragoons of Simcoe's regiment of Queen's Rangers, with drawn swords and glittering helmets, followed by British and Hessian infantry. *

Signal guns and signal fires were rousing the country. The militia and yeomanry armed themselves with such weapons as were at hand, and hastened to their alarm posts. The enemy took the old road, by what was called Galloping Hill, toward the village of Connecticut Farms ; fired upon from behind walls and thickets by the hasty levies of the country.

At Connecticut Farms, the retreating troops under Dayton

* Passages in the History of Elizabethtown, Capt. W. C. De Hart,

fell in with the Jersey brigade, under General Maxwell, and, a few militia joining them, the Americans were enabled to make some stand, and even to hold the enemy in check. The latter, however, brought up several field-pieces, and being reinforced by a second division which had crossed from Staten Island some time after the first, compelled the Americans again to retreat. Some of the enemy, exasperated at the unexpected opposition they had met with throughout their march, and pretending that the inhabitants of this village had fired upon them from their windows, began to pillage and set fire to the houses. It so happened that to this village the Rev. James Caldwell, "the rousing gospel preacher," had removed his family as to a place of safety, after his church at Elizabethtown had been burnt down by the British in January. On the present occasion he had retreated with the regiment to which he was chaplain. His wife, however, remained at the parsonage with her two youngest children, confiding in the protection of Providence, and the humanity of the enemy.

When the sacking of the village took place, she retired with her children into a back room of the house. Her infant of eight months was in the arms of an attendant; she herself was seated on the side of a bed holding a child of three years by the hand, and was engaged in prayer. All was terror and confusion in the village; when suddenly a musket was discharged in at the window. Two balls struck her in the breast, and she fell dead on the floor. The parsonage and church were set on fire, and it was with difficulty her body was rescued from the flames.

In the meantime Knyphausen was pressing on with his main force towards Morristown. The booming of alarm guns had roused the country; every valley was pouring out its yeomanry. Two thousand were said to be already in arms below the mountains.

Within half a mile of Springfield, Knyphausen halted to reconnoiter. That village, through which passes the road to Springfield, had been made the American rallying-point. It stands at the foot of what are called the Short Hills, on the west side of Rahway River, which runs in front of it. On the bank of the river, General Maxwell's Jersey brigade and the militia of the neighborhood were drawn up to dispute the passage; and on the Short Hills in the rear was Washington with the main body of his forces, not mutinous and in confusion, but all in good order, strongly posted, and ready for action.

Washington had arrived and taken his position that afternoon, prepared to withstand an encounter, though not to seek one. All night his camp fires lighted up the Short Hills, and he re-

mained on the alert expecting to be assailed in the morning; but in the morning no enemy was to be seen.

Knyphausen had experienced enough to convince him that he had been completely misinformed as to the disposition of the Jersey people and of the army. Disappointed as to the main object of his enterprise, he had retreated under cover of the night, to the place of his debarkation, intending to recross to Staten Island immediately.

In the camp at the Short Hills was the Reverend James Caldwell, whose home had been laid desolate. He was still ignorant of the event, but had passed a night of great anxiety, and, procuring the protection of a flag, hastened back in the morning to Connecticut Farms. He found the village in ashes, and his wife a mangled corpse!

In the course of the day Washington received a letter from Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who was reconnoitering in the neighborhood of Elizabethtown Point. "I have seen the enemy," writes he. "Those in view I calculate as about three thousand. There may be, and probably are, enough others out of sight. They have sent all their horses to the other side except about fifty or sixty. Their baggage has also been sent across, and their wounded. It is not ascertained that any of their infantry have passed on the other side. . . . The present movement may be calculated to draw us down and betray us into an action. They may have desisted from their intention of passing till night, for fear of our falling upon their rear."

As Washington was ignorant of the misinformation which had beguiled Knyphausen into this enterprise, the movements of that general, his sudden advance, and as sudden retreat, were equally inexplicable. At one time, he supposed his inroad to be a mere foraging incursion; then, as Hamilton had suggested, a device to draw him down from his stronghold into the plain, where the superiority of the British force would give them the advantage.

Knyphausen, in fact, had been impeded in crossing his troops to Staten Island, by the low tide and deep muddy shore, which rendered it difficult to embark the cavalry; and by a destructive fire kept up by militia posted along the river banks, and the adjacent woods. In the meanwhile he had time to reflect on the ridicule that would await him in New York, should his expedition prove fruitless, and end in what might appear a precipitate flight. This produced indecision of mind, and induced him to recall the troops which had already crossed, and which were necessary, he said, to protect his rear.

For several days he lingered with his troops at Elizabeth-

town and the Point beyond; obliging Washington to exercise unremitting vigilance for the safety of the Jerseys and of the Hudson. It was a great satisfaction to the latter to be joined by Major Henry Lee, who with his troop of horse had hastened on from the vicinity of Philadelphia, where he had recently been stationed.

In the meantime, the tragical fate of Mrs. Caldwell produced almost as much excitement throughout the country as that which had been caused in a preceding year, by the massacre of Miss McCrea. She was connected with some of the first people of New Jersey; was winning in person and character, and universally beloved. Knyphausen was vehemently assailed in the American papers, as if responsible for this atrocious act. The enemy, however, attributed her death to a random shot, discharged in a time of confusion, or to the vengeance of a menial who had a deadly pique against her husband; but the popular voice persisted in execrating it as the willful and wanton act of a British soldier.

On the 17th of June the fleet from the South actually arrived in the bay of New York, and Sir Henry Clinton landed his troops on Staten Island; but almost immediately reëmbarked them, as if meditating an expedition up the river.

Fearing for the safety of West Point, Washington set off on the 21st June, with the main body of his troops, towards Pompton; while General Greene, with Maxwell and Stark's brigades, Lee's dragoons and the militia of the neighborhood, remained encamped on the Short Hills, to cover the country and protect the stores at Morristown.

Washington's movements were slow and wary, unwilling to be far from Greene until better informed of the designs of the enemy. At Rockaway Bridge, about eleven miles beyond Morristown, he received word on the 23d, that the enemy were advancing from Elizabethtown against Springfield. Supposing the military depot at Morristown to be their ultimate object, he detached a brigade to the assistance of Greene, and fell back five or six miles, so as to be in supporting distance of him.

The reëmbarkation of the troops at Staten Island had, in fact, been a stratagem of Sir Henry Clinton to divert the attention of Washington, and enable Knyphausen to carry out the enterprise which had hitherto hung fire. No sooner did the latter ascertain that the American commander-in-chief had moved off with his main force towards the Highlands, than he sallied from Elizabethtown five thousand strong, with a large body of cavalry, and fifteen or twenty pieces of artillery; hoping not merely to destroy the public stores at Morristown, but

to get possession of those difficult hills and defiles, among which Washington's army had been so securely posted, and which constituted the strength of that part of the country.

It was early on the morning of the 23d that Knyphausen pushed forward toward Springfield. Besides the main road which passes directly through the village toward Morristown, there is another, north of it, called the Vauxhall road, crossing several small streams, the confluence of which forms the Rahway. These two roads unite beyond the village in the principal pass of the Short Hills. The enemy's troops advanced rapidly in two compact columns, the right one by the Vauxhall road, the other by the main or direct road. General Greene was stationed among the Short Hills, about a mile above the town. His troops were distributed at various posts, for there were many passes to guard.

At five o'clock in the morning, signal-guns gave notice of the approach of the enemy. The drums beat to arms throughout the camp. The troops were hastily called in from their posts among the mountain passes, and preparations were made to defend the village.

Major Lee with his dragoons and a picket-guard, was posted on the Vauxhall road, to check the right column of the enemy in its advance. Colonel Dayton, with his regiment of New Jersey militia, was to check the left column on the main road. Colonel Angel of Rhode Island, with about two hundred picked men, and a piece of artillery, was to defend a bridge over the Rahway, a little west of the town. Colonel Shreve, stationed with his regiment at a second bridge over a branch of the Rahway east of the town, was to cover, if necessary, the retreat of Colonel Angel. Those parts of Maxwell and Stark's brigades which were not thus detached, were drawn up on high grounds in the rear of the town, having the militia on their flanks.

There was some sharp fighting at a bridge on the Vauxhall road, where Major Lee with his dragoons and picket-guard held the right column at bay; a part of the column, however, forded the stream above the bridge, gained a commanding position, and obliged Lee to retire.

The left column met with similar opposition from Dayton and his Jersey regiment. None showed more ardor in the fight than Caldwell the chaplain. The image of his murdered wife was before his eyes. Finding the men in want of wadding, he galloped to the Presbyterian church and brought thence a quantity of Watts' psalm and hymn books, which he distributed for the purpose among the soldiers. "Now," cried he, "put Watts into them, boys!"

The severest fighting of the day was at the bridge over the Rahway. For upwards of half an hour Colonel Angel defended it with his handful of men against a vastly superior force. One fourth of his men were either killed or disabled: the loss of the enemy was still more severe. Angel was at length compelled to retire. He did so in good order, carrying off his wounded, and making his way through the village to the bridge beyond it. Here his retreat was bravely covered by Colonel Shreve, but he too was obliged to give way before the overwhelming force of the enemy, and join the brigades of Maxwell and Stark upon the hill.

General Greene, finding his front too much extended for his small force, and that he was in danger of being outflanked on the left by the column pressing forward on the Vauxhall road, took post with his main body on the first range of hills, where the roads were brought near to a point, and passed between him and the height occupied by Stark and Maxwell. He then threw out a detachment which checked the further advance of the right column of the enemy along the Vauxhall road, and secured that pass through the Short Hills. Feeling himself now strongly posted, he awaited with confidence the expected attempt of the enemy to gain the height. No such attempt was made. The resistance already experienced, especially at the bridge, and the sight of militia gathering from various points, dampened the ardor of the hostile commander. He saw that, should he persist in pushing for Morristown, he would have to fight his way through a country abounding with difficult passes, every one of which would be obstinately disputed; and that the enterprise, even if successful, might cost too much, besides taking him too far from New York, at a time when a French armament might be expected.

Before the brigade detached by Washington arrived at the scene of action, therefore, the enemy had retreated. Previous to their retreat they wreaked upon Springfield the same vengeance they had inflicted on Connecticut Farms. The whole village, excepting four houses, was reduced to ashes. Their second retreat was equally ignoble with their first. They were pursued and harassed the whole way to Elizabethtown by light scouting parties and by the militia and yeomanry of the country, exasperated by the sight of the burning village. Lee, too, came upon their rear-guard with his dragoons, captured a quantity of stores abandoned by them in the hurry of retreat, and made prisoners of several refugees.

It was sunset when the enemy reached Elizabethtown. During the night they passed over to Staten Island by their

bridge of boats. By six o'clock in the morning all had crossed, and the bridge had been removed—and the State of New Jersey, so long harassed by the campaignings of either army, was finally evacuated by the enemy. It had proved a school of war to the American troops. The incessant marchings and counter-marchings; the rude encampments; the exposures to all kinds of hardship and privation; the alarms; the stratagems; the rough encounters and adventurous enterprises of which this had been the theatre for the last three or four years, had rendered the patriot soldier hardy, adroit, and long-suffering; had accustomed him to danger, inured him to discipline, and brought him nearly on a level with the European mercenary in the habitudes and usages of arms, while he had the superior incitements of home, country, and independence. The ravaging incursions of the enemy had exasperated the most peace-loving parts of the country; made soldiers of the husbandmen, acquainted them with their own powers, and taught them that the foe was vulnerable. The recent ineffectual attempts of a veteran general to penetrate the fastnesses of Morristown, though at the head of a veteran force, “which would once have been deemed capable of sweeping the whole continent before it,” was a lasting theme of triumph to the inhabitants; and it is still the honest boast among the people of Morris County, that “the enemy never were able to get a footing among our hills.” At the same time the conflagration of villages, by which they sought to cover or revenge their repeated failures, and their precipitate retreat, harassed and insulted by half-disciplined militia, and a crude, rustic levy, formed an ignominious close to the British campaigns in the Jerseys.

CHAPTER LXII.

WASHINGTON APPLIES TO THE STATE LEGISLATURES FOR AID.

—SUBSCRIPTIONS OF THE LADIES OF PHILADELPHIA.—GATES APPOINTED TO COMMAND THE SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT.—FRENCH FLEET ARRIVES AT NEWPORT.—PREPARATION FOR A COMBINED MOVEMENT AGAINST NEW YORK.—ARNOLD OBTAINS COMMAND AT WEST POINT.—GREENE RESIGNS THE OFFICE OF QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

APPREHENSIVE that the next move of the enemy would be up the Hudson, Washington resumed his measures for the security of West Point; moving towards the Highlands in the latter

part of June. Circumstances soon convinced him that the enemy had no present intention of attacking that fortress, but merely menaced him at various points, to retard his operations, and oblige him to call out the militia; thereby interrupting agriculture, distressing the country, and rendering his cause unpopular. Having, therefore, caused the military stores in the Jerseys to be removed to more remote and secure places, he countermanded by letter the militia, which were marching to camp from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

He now exerted himself to the utmost to procure from the different State Legislatures their quotas and supplies for the regular army. "The sparing system," said he, "has been tried until it has brought us to a crisis little less than desperate." This was the time by one great exertion to put an end to the war. The basis of everything was the completion of the continental battalions to their full establishment; otherwise, nothing decisive could be attempted, and this campaign, like all the former, must be chiefly defensive. He warned against those "indolent and narrow politicians, who, except at the moment of some signal misfortune, are continually crying, *all is well*, and who to save a little present expense, and avoid some temporary inconvenience, with no ill designs in the main, would protract the war, and risk the perdition of our liberties." *

The desired relief, however, had to be effected through the ramifications of general and State governments, and their committees. The operations were tardy and unproductive. Liberal contributions were made by individuals, a bank was established by the inhabitants of Philadelphia to facilitate the supplies of the army, and an association of ladies of that city raised by subscription between seven and eight thousand dollars, which were put at the disposition of Washington, to be laid out in such a manner as he might think "most honorable and gratifying to the brave old soldiers who had borne so great a share of the burden of the war."

The capture of General Lincoln at Charleston had left the Southern department without a commander-in-chief. As there were likely to be important military operations in that quarter, Washington had intended to recommend General Greene for the appointment. He was an officer on whose abilities, discretion, and disinterested patriotism he had the fullest reliance, and whom he had always found thoroughly disposed to act in unison with him in his general plan of carrying on the war. Congress, however, with unbecoming precipitancy, gave that

* Letter to Governor Trumbull. Sparks, vii. 93.

important command to General Gates (June 13th), without waiting to consult Washington's views or wishes.

Gates, at the time, was on his estate in Virginia, and accepted the appointment with avidity, anticipating new triumphs. His old associate, General Lee, gave him an ominous caution at parting. "Beware that your Northern laurels do not change to Southern willows!"

On the 10th of July a French fleet, under the Chevalier de Ternay, arrived at Newport, in Rhode Island. It was composed of seven ships of the line, two frigates and two bombs, and convoyed transports on board of which there were upwards of five thousand troops. This was the first division of the forces promised by France, of which Lafayette had spoken. The second division had been detained at Brest for want of transports, but might soon be expected.

The Count de Rochambeau, lieutenant-general of the royal armies, was commander-in-chief of this auxiliary force. He was a veteran, fifty-five years of age, who had early distinguished himself, when colonel of the regiment of Auvergne, and had gained laurels in various battles, especially that of Kloster Camp, of which he decided the success. Since then, he had risen from one post of honor to another, until intrusted with his present important command.*

Another officer of rank and distinction in this force, was Major-general the Marquis de Chastellux, a friend and relative of Lafayette, but much his senior, being now forty-six years of age. He was not only a soldier, but a man of letters, and one familiar with courts as well as camps.

Count Rochambeau's first despatch to Vergennes, the French Minister of State (July 16th) gave a discouraging picture of affairs. "Upon my arrival here," writes he, "the country was in consternation, the paper money had fallen to sixty for one, and even the government takes it up at forty for one. Washington had for a long time only three thousand men under his command. The arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette, and the announcement of succors from France, afforded some encouragement; but the tories, who were very numerous, gave out that it was only a temporary assistance, like that of Count D'Estaing. In describing to you our reception at this place, we shall show you the feeling of all the inhabitants of the continent. This town is of considerable size, and contains, like the rest, both whigs and tories. I landed with my staff, without troops; nobody appeared in the streets; those at the windows

* Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, was born at Vendome, in France, 1725.

looked sad and depressed. I spoke to the principal persons of the place, and told them, as I wrote to General Washington, that this was merely the advanced guard of a greater force, and that the king was determined to support them with his whole power. In twenty-four hours their spirits rose, and last night all the streets, houses, and steeples were illuminated, in the midst of fire-works, and the greatest rejoicings. I am now here with a single company of grenadiers, until wood and straw shall have been collected; my camp is marked out, and I hope to have the troops landed to-morrow."

Still, however, there appears to have been a lingering feeling of disappointment in the public bosom. "The whigs are pleased," writes De Rochambeau, "but they say that the king ought to have sent twenty thousand men, and twenty ships to drive the enemy from New York; that the country was infallibly ruined; that it is impossible to find a recruit to send to General Washington's army, without giving him one hundred hard dollars to engage for six months' service, and they beseech His Majesty to assist them with all his strength. The war will be an expensive one; we pay even for our quarters, and for the land covered with the camp." *

The troops were landed to the east of the town; their encampment was on a fine situation, and extended nearly across the island. Much was said of their gallant and martial appearance. There was the noted regiment of Auvergne, in command of which the Count de Rochambeau had first gained his laurels, but which was now commanded by his son the viscount, thirty years of age. A legion of six hundred men also was especially admired; it was commanded by the Duke de Lauzun (Lauzun-Biron), who had gained reputation in the preceding year by the capture of Senegal. A feeling of adventure and romance, associated with the American struggle, had caused many of the young nobility to seek this new field of achievement, who, to use De Rochambeau's words, "brought out with them the heroic and chivalrous courage of the ancient French nobility." To their credit be it spoken also, they brought with them the ancient French politeness, for it was remarkable how soon they accommodated themselves to circumstances, made light of all the privations and inconveniences of a new country, and conformed to the familiar simplicity of republican manners. General Heath, who, by Washington's orders, was there to offer his services, was, by his own account, "charmed with the officers," who, on their part, he said, ex-

pressed the highest satisfaction with the treatment they received.

The instructions of the French ministry to the Count de Rochambeau placed him entirely under the command of General Washington. The French troops were to be considered as auxiliaries, and as such were to take the left of the American troops, and, in all cases of ceremony, to yield them the preference. This considerate arrangement had been adopted at the suggestion of the Marquis de Lafayette, and was intended to prevent the recurrence of those questions of rank and etiquette which had heretofore disturbed the combined service.

Washington, in general orders, congratulated the army on the arrival of this timely and generous succor, which he hailed as a new tie between France and America; anticipating that the only contention between the two armies would be to excel each other in good offices, and in the display of every military virtue. The American cockade had hitherto been black, that of the French was white; he recommended to his officers a cockade of black and white intermingled in compliment to their allies, and as a symbol of friendship and union.

His joy at this important reinforcement was dashed by the mortifying reflection, that he was still unprovided with the troops and military means requisite for the combined operations meditated. Still he took upon himself the responsibility of immediate action, and forthwith despatched Lafayette to have an interview with the French commanders, explain the circumstances of the case, and concert plans for the proposed attack upon New York.

"Pressed on all sides by a choice of difficulties," writes he to the President, "I have adopted that line of conduct which suited the dignity and faith of Congress, the reputation of these States, and the honor of our arms. Neither the season nor a regard to decency would permit delay. The die is cast, and it remains with the States to fulfill either their engagements, preserve their credit and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat. . . . I shall proceed on the supposition that they will ultimately consult their own interests and honor, and not suffer us to fail for want of means, which it is evidently in their power to afford. What has been done, and is doing, by some of the States, confirms the opinion I have entertained of the sufficient resources of the country. As to the disposition of the people to submit to any arrangements for bringing them forth, I see no reasonable grounds to doubt. If we fail for want of proper exertions, in any of the governments, I trust the responsibility will fall where it ought, and that I

shall stand justified to Congress, to my country, and to the world."

The arrival, however, of the British Admiral Graves, at New York, on the 13th of July, with six ships-of-the line, gave the enemy such a superiority of naval force, that the design on New York was postponed until the second French division should make its appearance, or a squadron under the Count de Guichen, which was expected from the West Indies.

In the meantime Sir Henry Clinton, who had information of all the plans and movements of the allies, determined to forestall the meditated attack upon New York, by beating up the French quarters on Rhode Island. This he was to do in person at the head of six thousand men, aided by Admiral Arbuthnot with his fleet. Sir Henry accordingly proceeded with his troops to Throg's Neck on the sound, there to embark on board of transports which Arbuthnot was to provide. No sooner did Washington learn that so large a force had left New York, than he crossed the Hudson to Peekskill, and prepared to move towards King's Bridge, with the main body of his troops, which had recently been reinforced. His intention was, either to oblige Sir Henry to abandon his project against Rhode Island, or to strike a blow at New York during his absence. As Washington was on horseback, observing the crossing of the last division of his troops, General Arnold approached, having just arrived in the camp. Arnold had been manœuvring of late to get the command of West Point, and, among other means, had induced Mr. Robert R. Livingston, then a New York member of Congress, to suggest it in a letter to Washington as a measure of great expediency. Arnold now accosted the latter to know whether any place had been assigned to him. He was told that he was to command the left wing, and Washington added, that they would have further conversation on the subject when he returned to head-quarters. The silence and evident chagrin with which the reply was received surprised Washington, and he was still more surprised when he subsequently learned that Arnold was more desirous of a garrison post than of a command in the field, although a post of honor had been assigned him, and active service was anticipated. Arnold's excuse was that his wounded leg still unfitted him for action either on foot or horseback; but that at West Point he might render himself useful.

The expedition of Sir Henry was delayed by the tardy arrival of transports. In the meantime he heard of the sudden move of Washington, and learned, moreover, that the position of the French at Newport had been strengthened by the militia from

the neighboring country. These tidings disconcerted his plans. He left Admiral Arbuthnot to proceed with his squadron to Newport, blockade the French fleet, and endeavor to intercept the second division, supposed to be on its way, while he with his troops hastened back to New York.

In consequence of their return Washington again withdrew his forces to the west side of the Hudson; first establishing a post and throwing up small works at Dobb's Ferry, about ten miles above King's Bridge, to secure a communication across the river for the transportation of troops and ordnance, should the design upon New York be prosecuted.

Arnold now received the important command which he had so earnestly coveted. It included the fortress at West Point and the posts from Fishkill to King's Ferry, together with the corps of infantry and cavalry advanced towards the enemy's line on the east side of the river. He was ordered to have the works at the Point completed as expeditiously as possible, and to keep all his posts on their guard against surprise; there being constant apprehensions that the enemy might make a sudden effort to gain possession of the river.

Having made these arrangements, Washington recrossed to the west side of the Hudson, and took post at Orangetown, or Tappan, on the borders of the Jerseys, and opposite to Dobb's Ferry, to be at hand for any attempt upon New York.

The execution of this cherished design, however, was again postponed by intelligence that the second division of the French reinforcements was blockaded in the harbor of Brest by the British: Washington still had hopes that it might be carried into effect by the aid of the squadron of the Count de Guichen from the West Indies; or of a fleet from Cadiz.

At this critical juncture, an embarrassing derangement took place in the quartermaster-general's department, of which General Greene was the head. The reorganization of this department had long been in agitation. A system had been digested by Washington, Schuyler, and Greene, adapted, as they thought, to the actual situation of the country. Greene had offered, should it be adopted, to continue in the discharge of the duties of the department, without any extra emolument other than would cover the expenses of his family. Congress devised a different scheme. He considered it incapable of execution, and likely to be attended with calamitous and disgraceful results; he therefore tendered his resignation. Washington endeavored to prevent its being accepted. "Unless effectual measures are taken," said he, "to induce General Greene and the other principal officers of that department to

continue their services, there must of necessity be a total stagnation of military business. We not only must cease from the preparations for the campaign, but in all probability shall be obliged to disperse, if not disband the army, for want of subsistence."

The tone and manner, however, assumed by General Greene in offering his resignation, and the time chosen, when the campaign was opened, the enemy in the field, and the French commanders waiting for coöperation, were deeply offensive to Congress. His resignation was promptly accepted: there was a talk even of suspending him from his command in the line.

Washington interposed his sagacious and considerate counsels to allay this irritation, and prevent the infliction of such an indignity upon an officer for whom he entertained the highest esteem and friendship. "A procedure of this kind, without a proper trial," said he, "must touch the feelings of every officer. It will show in a conspicuous point of view the uncertain tenure by which they hold their commissions. In a word, it will exhibit such a specimen of power, that I question much if there is an officer in the whole line that will hold a commission beyond the end of the campaign, if he does till then. Such an act in the most despotic government would be attended at least with loud complaints."

The counsels of Washington prevailed; the indignity was not inflicted, and Congress was saved from the error, if not disgrace, of discarding from her service one of the ablest and most meritorious of her generals.

Colonel Pickering was appointed to succeed Greene as quartermaster-general, but the latter continued for some time, at the request of Washington, to aid in conducting the business of the department. Colonel Pickering acquitted himself in his new office with zeal, talents, and integrity, but there were radical defects in the system which defied all ability and exertion.

The commissariat was equally in a state of derangement. "At this very juncture," writes Washington (August, 20th), "I am reduced to the painful alternative, either of dismissing a part of the militia now assembling, or of letting them come forward to starve; which it will be extremely difficult for the troops already in the field to avoid. . . . Every day's experience proves more and more that the present mode of supplies is the most uncertain, expensive, and injurious that could be devised. It is impossible for us to form any calculations of what we are to expect, and, consequently, to concert

any plans for future execution. No adequate provision of forage having been made, we are now obliged to subsist the horses of the army by force, which, among other evils, often gives rise to civil disputes, and prosecutions, as vexatious as they are burdensome to the public." In his emergencies he was forced to empty the magazines at West Point; yet these afforded but temporary relief; scarcity continued to prevail to a distressing degree, and on the 6th of September, he complains that the army has for two or three days been entirely destitute of meat. "Such injury to the discipline of the army," adds he, "and such distress to the inhabitants, result from these frequent events, that my feelings are hurt beyond description at the cries of the one and at seeing the other."

The anxiety of Washington at this moment of embarrassment was heightened by the receipt of disastrous intelligence from the South; the purport of which we shall succinctly relate in another chapter.

CHAPTER LXIII.

NORTH CAROLINA.—DIFFICULTIES OF ITS INVASION.—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE AND COUNTRY.—SUMTER, HIS CHARACTER AND STORY.—ROCKY MOUNT.—HANGING ROCK.—SLOW ADVANCE OF DE KALB.—GATES TAKES COMMAND.—DESOLATE MARCH.—BATTLE OF CAMDEN.—FLIGHT OF GATES.—SUMTER SURPRISED BY TARLETON AT THE WAXHAW.—WASHINGTON'S OPINION OF MILITIA.—HIS LETTER TO GATES.

LORD CORNWALLIS, when left in military command at the South by Sir Henry Clinton, was charged, it will be recollected, with the invasion of North Carolina. It was an enterprise in which much difficulty was to be apprehended, both from the character of the people and the country. The original settlers were from various parts, most of them men who had experienced political or religious oppression, and had brought with them a quick sensibility to wrong, a stern appreciation of their rights, and an indomitable spirit of freedom and independence. In the heart of the State was a hardy Presbyterian stock, the Scotch Irish, as they were called, having emigrated from Scotland to Ireland, and thence to America; and who were said to possess the impulsiveness of the Irishman, with the dogged resolution of the Covenanter.

The early history of the colony abounds with instances of this spirit among its people. "They always behaved insolently to their governors," complains Governor Barrington in 1731; "some they have driven out of the country—at other times they set up a government of their own choice, supported by men under arms." It was in fact the spirit of popular liberty and self-government which stirred within them, and gave birth to the glorious axiom: "The rights of the many against the exactions of the few." So ripe was this spirit at an early day, that when the boundary line was run, in 1727, between North Carolina and Virginia, the borderers were eager to be included within the former province, "as there they paid no tribute to God or Cæsar."

It was this spirit which gave rise to the confederacy, called the Regulation, formed to withstand the abuses of power; and the first blood shed in our country, in resistance to arbitrary taxation, was at Alamance in this province, in a conflict between the regulators and Governor Tryon. Above all, it should never be forgotten, that at Mecklenburg, in the heart of North Carolina, was fulminated the first declaration of independence of the British crown, upwards of a year before a like declaration by Congress.

A population so characterized presented formidable difficulties to the invader. The physical difficulties arising from the nature of the country consisted in its mountain fastnesses in the north-western part, its vast forests, its sterile tracts, its long rivers, destitute of bridges, and which, though fordable in fair weather were liable to be swollen by sudden storms and freshets, and rendered deep, turbulent, and impassable. These rivers, in fact, which rushed down from the mountain, but wound sluggishly through the plains, were the military strength of the country, as we shall have frequent occasion to show in the course of our narrative.

Lord Cornwallis forbore to attempt the invasion of North Carolina until the summer heats should be over and the harvests gathered in. In the meantime he disposed of his troops in cantonments, to cover the frontiers of South Carolina and Georgia, and maintain their internal quiet. The command of the frontiers was given by him to Lord Rawdon, who made Camden his principal post. This town, the capital of Kershaw District, a fertile, fruitful country, was situated on the east bank of the Wateree River, on the road leading to North Carolina. It was to be the grand military depot for the projected campaign.

Having made these dispositions, Lord Cornwallis set up his

head-quarters at Charleston, where he occupied himself in regulating the civil and commercial affairs of the province, in organizing the militia of the lower districts, and in forwarding provisions and munitions of war to Camden.

The proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, putting an end to all neutrality, and the rigorous penalties and persecutions with which all infractions of its terms were punished, had for a time quelled the spirit of the country. By degrees, however, the dread of British power gave way to impatience of British exactions. Symptoms of revolt manifested themselves in various parts. They were encouraged by intelligence that De Kalb, sent by Washington, was advancing through North Carolina at the head of two thousand men, and that the militia of that State and of Virginia were joining his standard. This was soon followed by tidings that Gates, the conqueror of Burgoyne, was on his way to take command of the Southern forces.

The prospect of such aid from the North reanimated the Southern patriots. One of the most eminent of these was Thomas Sumter, whom the Carolinians had surnamed the Game Cock. He was between forty and fifty years of age, brave, hardy, vigorous, resolute. He had served against the Indians in his boyhood, during the old French war, and had been present at the defeat of Braddock. In the present war he had held the rank of lieutenant-colonel of riflemen in the continental line. After the fall of Charleston, when patriots took refuge in contiguous States, or in the natural fastnesses of the country, he had retired with his family into one of the latter.

The lower part of South Carolina for upwards of a hundred miles back from the sea is a level country, abounding with swamps, locked up in the windings of the rivers which flow down from the Appalachian Mountains. Some of these swamps are mere canebrakes, of little use until subdued by cultivation, when they yield abundant crops of rice. Others are covered with forests of cypress, cedar, and laurel, green all the year and odoriferous, but tangled with vines and almost impenetrable. In their bosoms, however, are fine savannahs; natural lawns, open to cultivation, and yielding abundant pasturage. It requires local knowledge, however, to penetrate these wildernesses, and hence they form strongholds to the people of the country. In one of these natural fastnesses, on the borders of the Santee, Sumter had taken up his residence, and hence he would sally forth in various directions. During a temporary absence his retreat had been invaded, his house burnt to the ground, his wife and children driven forth without shelter. Private injury had thus been added to the incentives of patriotism. Emerg-

ing from his hiding-place he had thrown himself among a handful of his fellow-sufferers who had taken refuge in North Carolina. They chose him at once as a leader, and resolved on a desperate struggle for the deliverance of their native State. Destitute of regular weapons, they forged rude substitutes out of the implements of husbandry. Old mill-saws were converted into broadswords; knives at the ends of poles served for lances; while the country housewives gladly gave up their pewter dishes and other utensils, to be melted down and cast into bullets for such as had firearms.

When Sumter led this gallant band of exiles over the border, they did not amount in number to two hundred; yet, with these, he attacked and routed a well-armed body of British troops and tories, the terror of the frontier. His followers supplied themselves with weapons from the slain. In a little while his band was augmented by recruits. Parties of militia, also, recently embodied under the compelling measures of Cornwallis, deserted to the patriot standard. Thus reinforced to the amount of six hundred men, he made, on the 30th of July a spirited attack on the British post at Rocky Mount, near the Catawba, but was repulsed. A more successful attack was made by him, eight days afterwards, on another post at Hanging Rock. The Prince of Wales regiment which defended it was nearly annihilated, and a large body of North Carolina loyalists, under Colonel Brian, was routed and dispersed. The gallant exploits of Sumter were emulated in other parts of the country, and the partisan war thus commenced was carried on with an audacity that soon obliged the enemy to call in their outposts, and collect their troops in large masses.

The advance of De Kalb with reinforcements from the North, had been retarded by various difficulties, the most important of which was want of provisions. This had been especially the case, he said, since his arrival in North Carolina. The legislative or executive power, he complained, gave him no assistance, nor could he obtain supplies from the people but by military force. There was no flour in the camp, nor were dispositions made to furnish any. His troops were reduced for a time to short allowance, and at length, on the 6th of July, brought to a positive halt at Deep River.* The North Carolina militia, under General Caswell, were already in the field, on the road to Camden, beyond the Pedee River. He was anxious to form a junction with them, and with some Virginia troops, under Colonel Porterfield, reliques of the defenders of

* A branch of Cape Fear River. The aboriginal name, Supporah.

Charleston; but a wide and sterile region lay between him and them, difficult to be traversed, unless magazines were established in advance, or he were supplied with provisions to take with him. Thus circumstanced, he wrote to Congress and to the State Legislature, representing his situation, and entreating relief. For three weeks he remained in this encampment, foraging an exhausted country for a meagre subsistence, and was thinking of deviating to the right, and seeking the fertile counties of Mecklenburg and Rowan, when, on the 25th of July, General Gates arrived at the camp.

The baron greeted him with a continental salute from his little park of artillery, and received him with the ceremony and deference due to a superior officer who was to take the command. There was a contest of politeness between the two generals. Gates approved of De Kalb's standing orders, but at the first review of the troops, to the great astonishment of the baron, gave orders for them to hold themselves in readiness to march at a *moment's warning*. It was evident he meant to signalize himself by celerity of movement in contrast with protracted delays.

It was in vain the destitute situation of the troops was represented to him, and that they had not a day's provision in advance. His reply was, that wagons laden with supplies were coming on, and would overtake them in two days.

On the 27th, he actually put the army in motion over the Buffalo Ford, on the direct road to Camden. Colonel Williams, the adjutant-general of De Kalb, warned him of the sterile nature of that route, and recommended a more circuitous one further north, which the baron had intended to take, and which passed through the abundant county of Mecklenburg. Gates persisted in taking the direct route, observing that he should the sooner form a junction with Caswell and the North Carolina militia; and as to the sterility of the country, his supplies would soon overtake him.

The route proved all that had been represented. It led through a region of pine barrens, sand hills, and swamps, with few human habitations, and those mostly deserted. The supplies of which he had spoken never overtook him. His army had to subsist itself on lean cattle, roaming almost wild in the woods; and to supply the want of bread with green Indian corn, unripe apples, and peaches. The consequence was, a distressing prevalence of dysentery.

Having crossed the Pedee River on the 3d of August, the army was joined by a handful of brave Virginia regulars, under Lieutenant-colonel Porterfield, who had been wandering about

the country since the disaster of Charleston ; and, on the 7th, the much desired junction took place with the North Carolina militia. On the 13th they encamped at Rugeley's Mills, otherwise called Clermont, about twelve miles from Camden, and on the following day were reinforced by a brigade of seven hundred Virginia militia, under General Stevens.

On the approach of Gates, Lord Rawdon had concentrated his forces at Camden. The post was flanked by the Wateree River and Pine-tree Creek, and strengthened with redoubts. Lord Cornwallis had hastened hither from Charleston on learning that affairs in this quarter were drawing to a crisis, and had arrived here on the 13th. The British effective force thus collected was something more than two thousand, including officers. About five hundred were militia and tory refugees from North Carolina.

The forces under Gates, according to the return of his adjutant-general, were three thousand and fifty-two fit for duty ; more than two thirds of them, however, were militia.

On the 14th, he received an express from General Sumter, who, with his partisan corps, after harassing the enemy at various points, was now endeavoring to cut off their supplies from Charleston. The object of the express was to ask a reinforcement of regulars to aid him in capturing a large convoy of clothing, ammunition, and stores, on its way to the garrison, and which would pass Wateree Ferry, about a mile from Camden.

Gates accordingly detached Colonel Woolford of the Maryland line, with one hundred regulars, a party of artillery, and two brass field-pieces. On the same evening he moved with his main force to take post at a deep stream about seven miles from Camden, intending to attack Lord Rawdon or his redoubts should he march out in force to repel Sumter.

It seems hardly credible that Gates should have been so remiss in collecting information concerning the movements of his enemy as to be utterly unaware that Lord Cornwallis had arrived at Camden. Such, however, we are assured by his adjutant-general, was the fact. *

By a singular coincidence, Lord Cornwallis on the very same evening sallied forth from Camden to attack the American Camp at Clermont.

About two o'clock at night, the two forces blundered, as it were, on each other about half way. A skirmish took place between their advance guards, in which Porterfield of the Virginia regulars was mortally wounded. Some prisoners were taken

* Narrative of Adjutant-general Williams.

on either side. From these the respective commanders learnt the nature of the forces each had stumbled upon. Both halted, formed their troops for action, but deferred further hostilities until daylight.

Gates was astounded at being told that the enemy at hand was Cornwallis with three thousand men. Calling a council of war, he demanded what was best to be done. For a moment or two there was blank silence. It was broken by General Stevens of the Virginia militia, with the question, "Gentlemen, is it not too late *now* to do anything but fight?" No other advice was asked or offered, and all were required to repair to their respective commands,* though General De Kalb, we are told, was of opinion that they should regain their position at Clermont, and there await an attack.

In forming the line, the first Maryland division, including the Delawares, was on the right, commanded by De Kalb. The Virginia militia under Stevens, were on the left. Caswell with the North Carolinians formed the centre. The artillery was in battery on the road. Each flank was covered by a marsh. The second Maryland brigade formed a reserve, a few hundred yards in rear of the first.

At daybreak (August 16th), the enemy were dimly descried advancing in column; they appeared to be displaying to the right. The deputy adjutant-general ordered the artillery to open a fire upon them, and then rode to General Gates, who was in the rear of the line, to inform him of the cause of the firing. Gates ordered that Stevens should advance briskly with his brigade of Virginia militia and attack them while in the act of displaying. No sooner did Stevens receive the order than he put his brigade in motion, but discovered that the right wing of the enemy was already in line. A few sharp-shooters were detached to run forward, post themselves behind trees within forty or fifty yards of the enemy to extort their fire while at a distance and render it less terrible to the militia. The expedient failed. The British rushed on shouting and firing. Stevens called to his men to stand firm, and put them in mind of their bayonets. His words were unheeded. The inexperienced militia, dismayed and confounded by this impetuous assault, threw down their loaded muskets and fled. The panic spread to the North Carolina militia. Part of them made a temporary stand, but soon joined with the rest in flight, rendered headlong and disastrous by the charge and pursuit of Tarleton and his cavalry.

Gates, seconded by his officers, made several attempts to rally

* Narrative of Adjutant-general Williams.

the militia, but was borne along with them. The day was hazy; there was no wind to carry off the smoke, which hung over the field of battle like a thick cloud. Nothing could be seen distinctly. Supposing that the regular troops were dispersed like the militia, Gates gave all up for lost, and retreated from the field.

The regulars, however, had not given way. The Maryland brigades and the Delaware regiment, unconscious that they were deserted by the militia, stood their ground, and bore the brunt of the battle. Though repeatedly broken, they as often rallied, and braved even the deadly push of the bayonet. At length a charge of Tarleton's cavalry on their flank threw them into confusion, and drove them into the woods and swamps. None showed more gallantry on this disastrous day than the Baron de Kalb; he fought on foot with the second Maryland brigade, and fell exhausted after receiving eleven wounds. His aide-de-camp, De Buysson, supported him in his arms and was repeatedly wounded in protecting him. He announced the rank and nation of his general, and both were taken prisoners. De Kalb died in the course of a few days, dictating in his last moments a letter expressing his affection for the officers and men of his division who had so nobly stood by him in this deadly strife.

If the militia fled too soon in this battle, said the adjutant-general, the regulars remained too long; fighting when there was no hope of victory.*

General Gates in retreating, had hoped to rally a sufficient force at Clermont to cover the retreat of the regulars, but the further they fled, the more the militia were dispersed, until the generals were abandoned by all but their aides. To add to the mortification of Gates, he learned in the course of his retreat that Sumter had been completely successful, and having reduced the enemy's redoubt on the Wateree, and captured one hundred prisoners and forty loaded wagons, was marching off with his booty on the opposite side of the river; apprehending danger from the quarter in which he had heard firing in the morning. Gates had no longer any means of coöperating with him; he sent orders to him, therefore, to retire in the best manner he could; while he himself proceeded with General Caswell towards the village of Charlotte, about sixty miles distant.

Cornwallis was apprehensive that Sumter's corps might form a rallying point to the routed army. On the morning of the 17th of August, therefore, he detached Tarleton in pursuit with

* Williams' Narrative.

a body of cavalry and light infantry, about three hundred and fifty strong. Sumter was retreating up the western side of the Wateree, much encumbered by his spoils and prisoners. Tarleton pushed up by forced and concealed marches on the eastern side. Horses and men suffered from the intense heat of the weather. At dusk Tarleton descried the fires of the American camp about a mile from the opposite shore. He gave orders to secure all boats on the river, and to light no fire in the camp. In the morning his sentries gave word that the Americans were quitting their encampment. It was evident they knew nothing of a British force being in pursuit of them. Tarleton now crossed the Wateree; the infantry with a three-pounder passed in boats; the cavalry swam their horses where the river was not a fordable. The delay in crossing, and the diligence of Sumter's march, increased the distance between the pursuers and the pursued. About noon a part of Tarleton's force gave out through heat and fatigue. Leaving them to repose on the bank of Fishing Creek, he pushed on with about one hundred dragoons, the freshest and most able; still marching with great circumspection. As he entered the valley, a discharge of small arms from a thicket tumbled a dragoon from his saddle. His comrades galloped up to the place and found two American videttes whom they sabred before Tarleton could interpose. A sergeant and five dragoons rode up to the summit of a neighboring hill to reconnoiter. Crouching on their horses they made signs to Tarleton. He cautiously approached the crest of the hill, and looking over beheld the American camp on a neighboring height, and apparently in a most negligent condition.

Sumter, in fact, having pressed his retreat to the neighborhood of the Catawba Ford, and taken a strong position at the mouth of the Fishing Creek, and his patrols having scoured the road without discovering any signs of an enemy, considered himself secure from surprise. The two shots fired by his videttes had been heard, but were supposed to have been made by the militia shooting cattle. The troops having for the last four days been almost without food or sleep, were now indulged in complete relaxation. Their arms were stacked and they were scattered about, some strolling, some lying on the grass under the trees, some bathing in the river. Sumter himself had thrown off part of his clothes on account of the heat of the weather.

Having well reconnoitered this negligent camp, indulging in summer supineness and sultry repose, Tarleton prepared for an instant attack. His cavalry and infantry formed into one line, dashed forward with a general shout, and, before the

Americans could recover from their surprise, got between them and the parade ground on which the muskets were stacked.

All was confusion and consternation in the American camp. Some opposition was made from behind baggage wagons, and there was skirmishing in various quarters, but in a little while there was a universal flight to the river and the woods. Between three and four hundred were killed and wounded; all their arms and baggage, with two brass-field pieces, fell into the hands of the enemy, who also recaptured the prisoners and booty taken at Camden. Sumter with about three hundred and fifty of his men effected a retreat; he galloped off, it is said, without saddle, hat, or coat.

Gates, on reaching the village of Charlotte, had been joined by some fugitives from his army. He continued on to Hillsborough, one hundred and eighty miles from Camden, where he made a stand and endeavored to rally his scattered forces. His regular troops, however, were little more than one thousand. As to the militia of North and South Carolina, they had dispersed to their respective homes, depending upon the patriotism and charity of the farmers along the road for food and shelter.

It was not until the beginning of September that Washington received word of the disastrous reverse at Camden. The shock was the greater, as previous reports from that quarter had represented the operations a few days preceding the action as much in our favor. It was evident to Washington that the course of war must ultimately tend to the Southern States, yet the situation of affairs in the North did not permit him to detach any sufficient force for their relief. All that he could do for the present was to endeavor to hold the enemy in check in that quarter. For this purpose, he gave orders that some regular troops enlisted in Maryland for the war, and intended for the main army, should be sent to the southward. He wrote to Governor Rutledge of South Carolina (12th September), to raise a permanent, compact, well-organized body of troops, instead of depending upon a numerous army of militia, always "inconceivably expensive, and too fluctuating and undisciplined" to oppose a regular force. He was still more urgent and explicit on this head in his letters to the President of Congress (September 15th). "Regular troops alone," said he, "are equal to the exigencies of modern war, as well for defense as offense; and whenever a substitute is attempted, it must prove illusory and ruinous. No militia will ever acquire the habits necessary to resist a regular force. The firmness requisite for the real business of fighting is only to be attained by a constant course of discipline and service. I have never

yet been witness to a single instance, that can justify a different opinion; and it is most earnestly to be wished, that the liberties of America may no longer be trusted, in any material degree, to so precarious a dependence. . . . In my ideas of the true system of war at the southward, the object ought to be to have a good army, rather than a large one. Every exertion should be made by North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, to raise a permanent force of six thousand men, exclusive of horse and artillery. These, with the occasional aid of the militia in the vicinity of the scene of action, will not only suffice to prevent the further progress of the enemy, but, if properly supplied, to oblige them to compact their force and relinquish a part of what they now hold. To expel them from the country entirely is what we cannot aim at, till we derive more effectual support from abroad; and by attempting too much, instead of going forward, we shall go backward. Could such a force be once set on foot, it would immediately make an inconceivable change in the face of affairs not only in the opposition to the enemy, but in expense, consumption of provisions, and waste of arms and stores. No magazines can be equal to the demands of an army of militia, and none need economy more than ours."

He had scarce written the foregoing, when he received a letter from the now unfortunate Gates, dated at Hillsborough, August 30th and September 3d, giving particulars of his discomfiture. No longer vaunting and vainglorious, he pleads nothing but his patriotism, and deprecates the fall which he apprehends awaits him. The appeal which he makes to Washington's magnanimity to support him in this day of his reverse, is the highest testimonial he could give to the exalted character of the man whom he once affected to underrate and aspired to supplant.

"Anxious for the public good," said he, "I shall continue my unwearied endeavors to stop the progress of the enemy, reinstate our affairs, recommence an offensive war, and recover all our losses in the Southern States. But if being unfortunate is solely a reason sufficient for removing me from command, I shall most cheerfully submit to the orders of Congress, and resign an office which few generals would be anxious to possess, and where the utmost skill and fortitude are subject to be baffled by difficulties, which must for a time surround the chief in command here. That your Excellency may meet with no such difficulties, that your road to fame and fortune may be smooth and easy, is the sincere wish of your most humble servant."

Again: "If I can yet render good service to the United

States, it will be necessary it should be seen that I have the support of Congress, and of your Excellency : otherwise, some men may think they please my superiors by blaming me, and thus recommend themselves to favor. But you, sir, will be too generous to lend an ear to such men, if such there be, and will show your greatness of soul rather by protecting than slighting the unfortunate."

Washington in his reply, while he acknowledged the shock and surprise caused by the first account of the unexpected event, did credit to the behavior of the continental troops. "The accounts," added he, "which the enemy give of the action, show that their victory was dearly bought. Under present circumstances, the system which you are pursuing seems to be extremely proper. It would add no good purpose to take a position near the enemy while you are so far inferior in force. If they can be kept in check by the light irregular troops under Colonel Sumter and other active officers, they will gain nothing by the time which must be necessarily spent by you in collecting and arranging the new army, forming magazines and replacing the stores which were lost in the action.

Washington still cherished the idea of a combined attack upon New York as soon as a French naval force should arrive. The destruction of the enemy here would relieve this part of the Union from an internal war, and enable its troops and resources to be united with those of France in vigorous efforts against the common enemy elsewhere. Hearing, therefore, that the Count de Guichen, with his West India squadron, was approaching the coast, Washington prepared to proceed to Hartford in Connecticut, there to hold a conference with the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay, and concert a plan for future operations, of which the attack on New York was to form the principal feature.







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